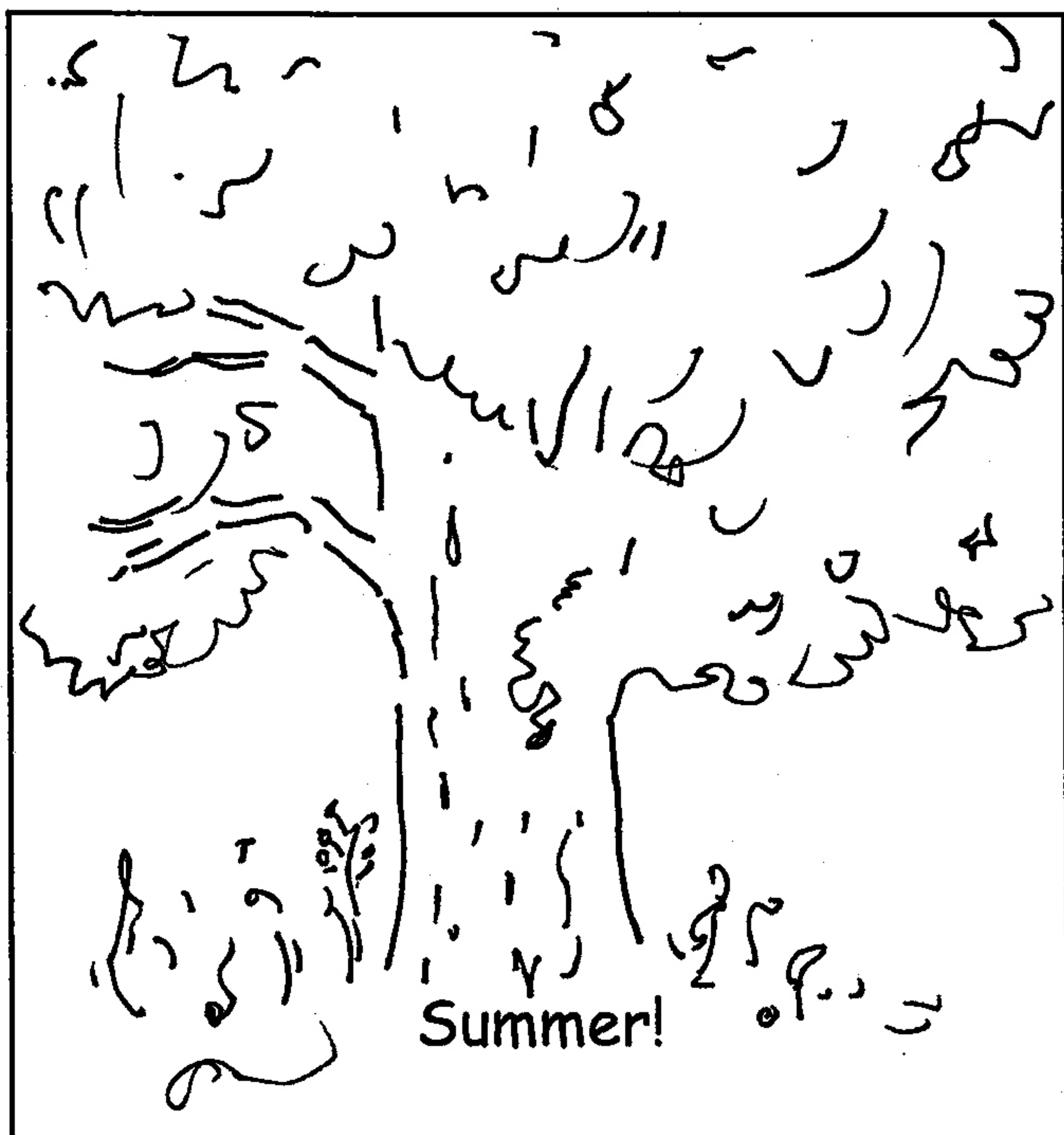
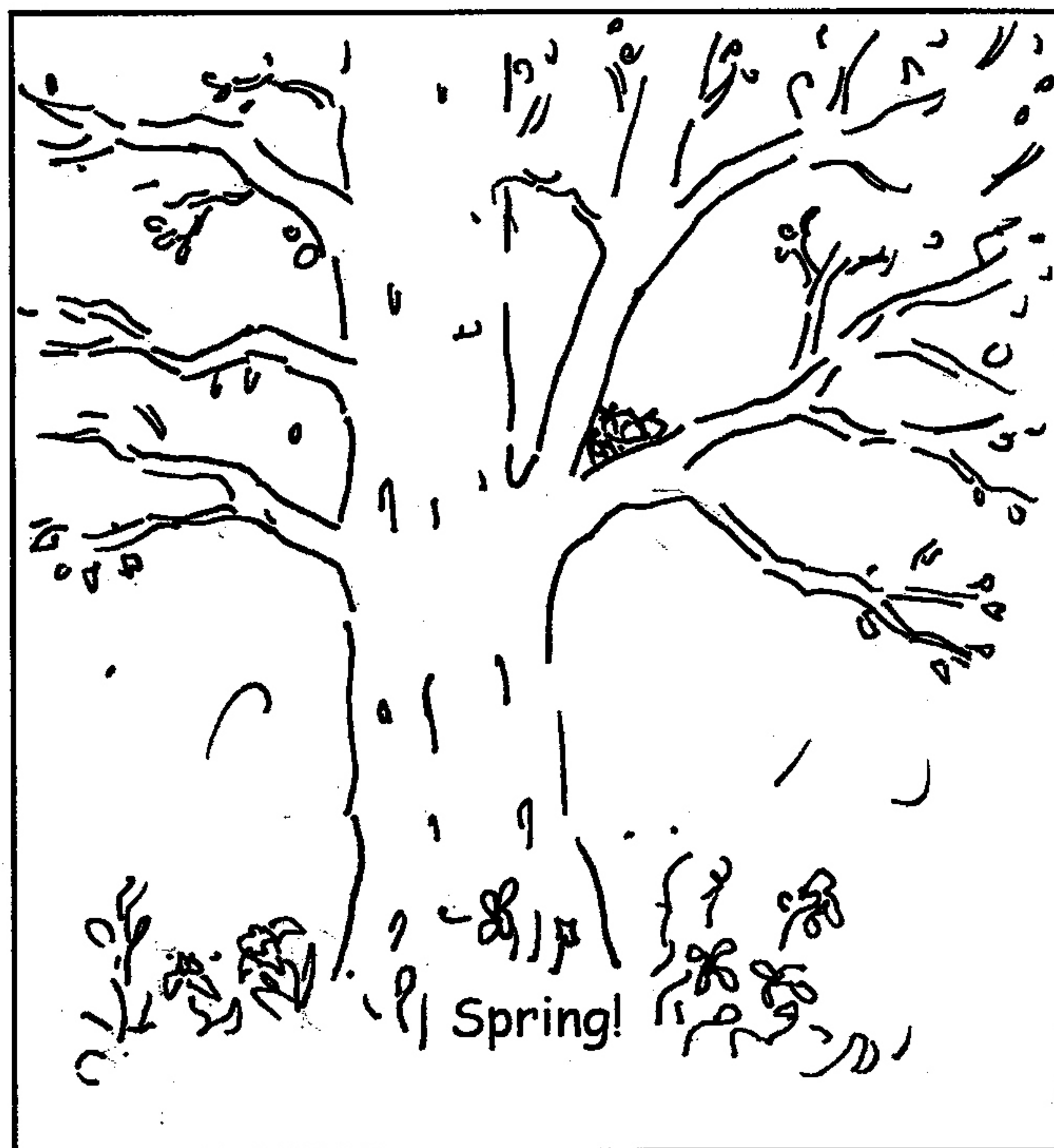
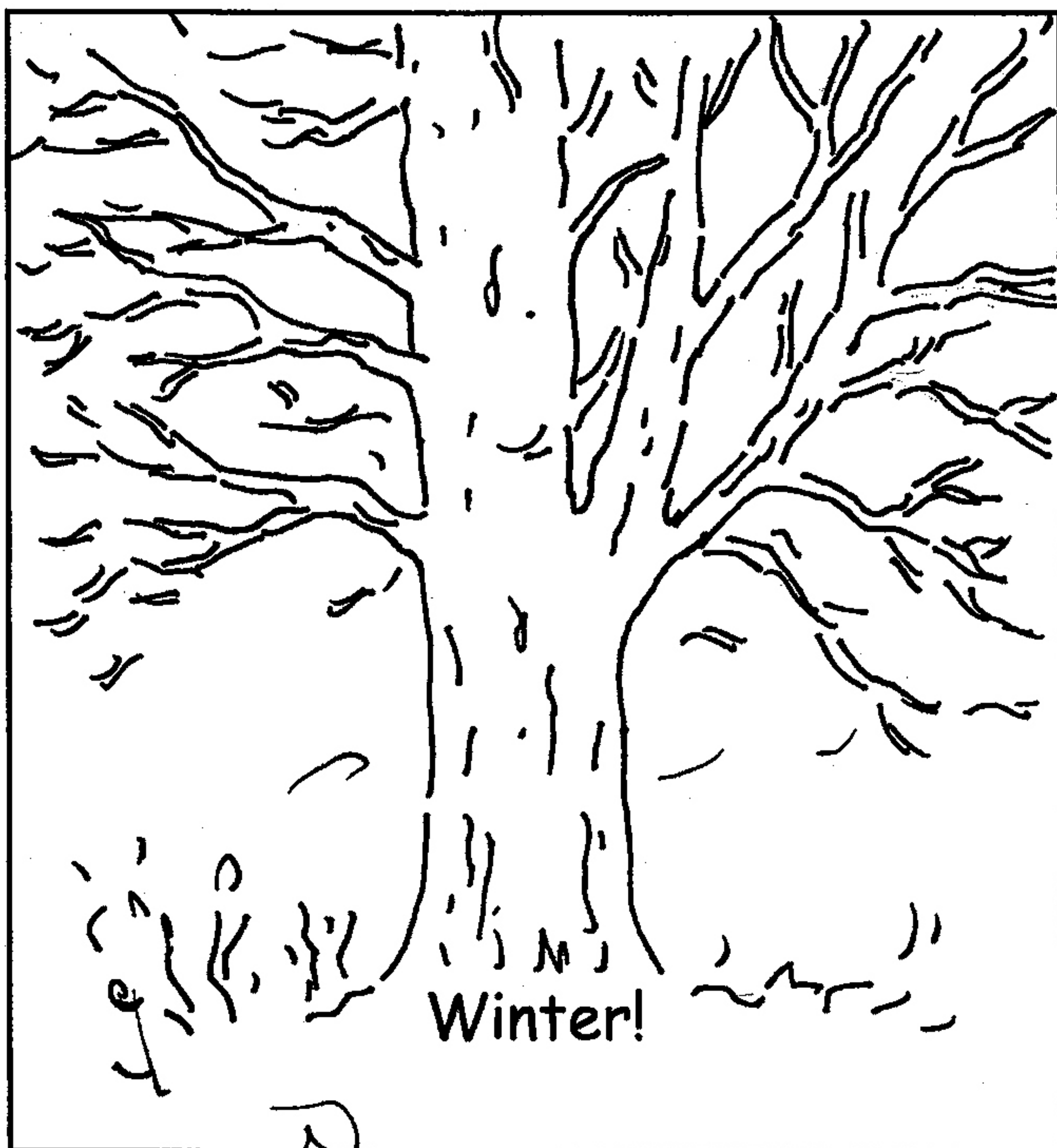


A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A TREE!

Beginnings

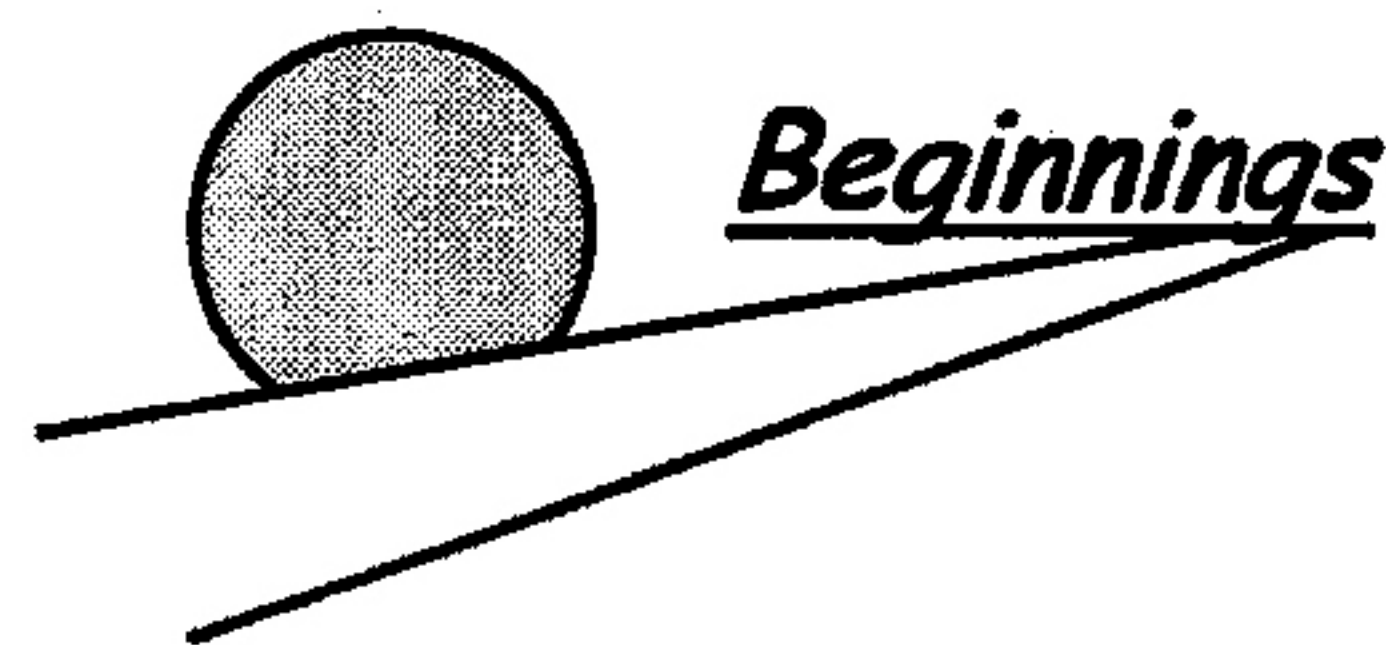


Beginnings 2005-2006(1)

Arkansas Department of Human Services

Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education, Little Rock, AR

School of Human Environmental Sciences, 1UA, Fayetteville, AR





The Parts of a Tree

Stems join onto
branches

A tree has leaves

Leaves hang by stems

Branches join to the trunk

Bark covers the
outside of the
trunk

The trunk grows from roots

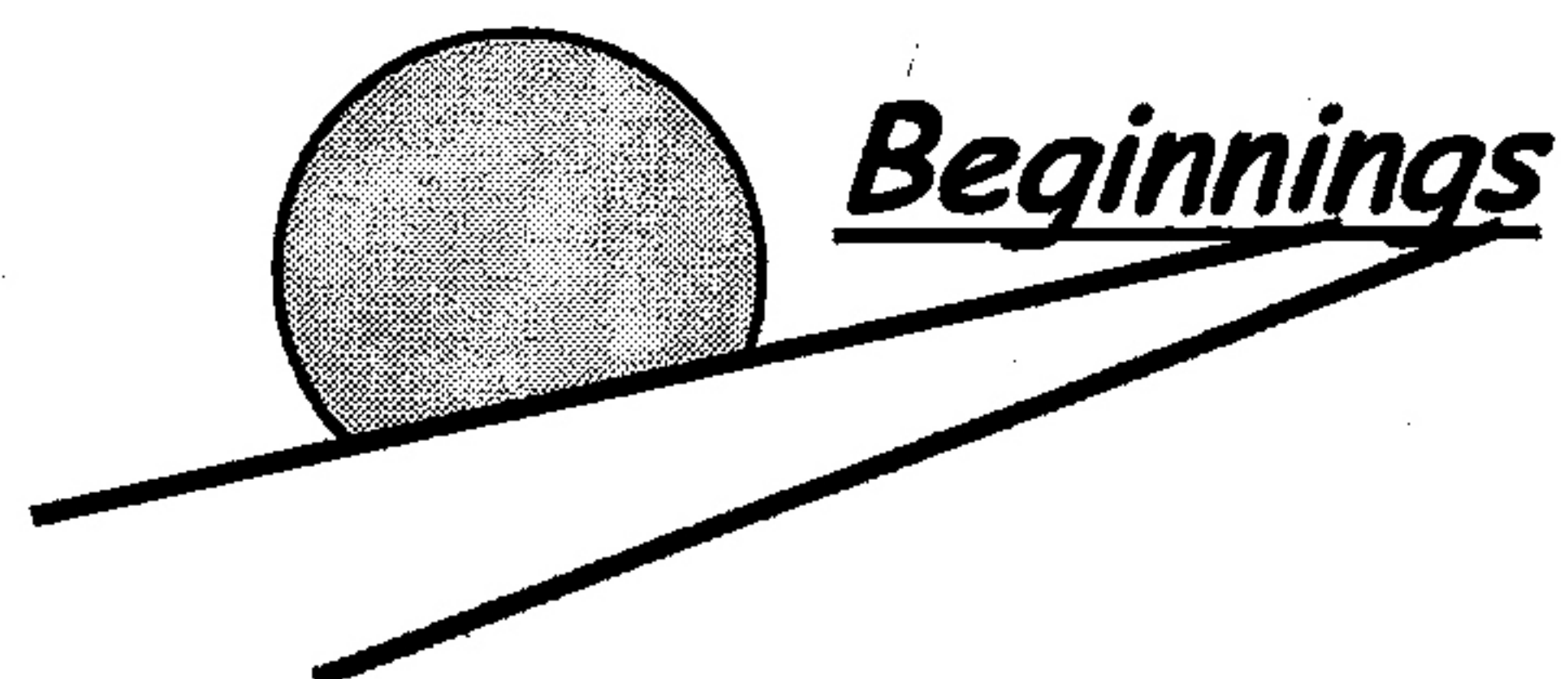
Roots

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Beginnings is a publication of the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the School of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

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Illustrations by Elizabeth Mathews/Laverne Nelson. Photos provided by UA Nursery School.



A Year in the Life of a Tree!



Have you ever stopped to consider how important trees are to humans? From trees we receive shelter, enjoy innumerable products, and are protected by their shade. However, the aesthetic relationship of colors, shapes and textures that is experienced from looking at trees is nearly as important. By looking at trees we keep track of the seasons. When the leaves are full and green, we know that summer is upon us. When tinges of yellow and orange appear in the foliage, then we know fall is fast approaching. Stark, bare branches signify winter's chill, while soft early greens announce the return of spring. This issue of *Beginnings* is designed to cultivate an appreciation of the wonderful world of trees. Ideas and activities are included to introduce and continue the topic of study about trees throughout the year. This will, of course, tie into seasonal experiences as you examine a year in the life of a tree.

What's New?

This year in *Beginnings* you will find some new additions. They are:

- **Care for the Caregiver**—Because we feel it is vitally important that you, the caregiver, take care of yourself, *Mardi Crandall* has consented to author a column that gives tips and ideas to help get you through a successful day.
- **Using Nature's Resources**—There are many natural, re-cyclable materials that can be used effectively in the classroom environment. *Karen Beaton*, will have tips and ideas of things to help nurture a love for the natural environment.
- **Benchmarking** —Activities will be "benchmarked" . . . meaning that they address specific skills and development of young children. (see page six for a more detailed explanation).
- **Special for Infants and Toddlers**—This page will include tips and ideas that are designed especially for those who work with infants and toddlers. *Kimberly Witte* will be the author.

As a committee, we hope that these additional columns will be helpful. Let us know!

Mardi Cranall is currently an instructor of child development in the School of Human Environmental Sciences, UA Fayetteville.

Karen Beaton is the Preschool Coordinator at The New School , Fayetteville.

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Caring for the Caregiver

By Mardi Cranall

*If you are caring for a group of children—or are a director caring for the people who do—you have a job that can be overwhelming. In fact, some people have compared your role to that of an air traffic controller or an EMT when it comes to producing stress. That's why we have created a new column just for you. Each issue of *Beginnings* will include information that you may find helpful to avoid or reduce the burnout so common in our field. We'll give you ideas for taking care of yourself. We welcome the ideas you would like to share with others. E-mail me at mcranda@uark.edu (include Beginnings in the RE: space) or write me at 118 HOEC Building, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, 72701.*

Why did I get into childcare anyway?

The book *Avoiding Burnout: Strategies for Managing Time, Space, and People in Early Childhood Education* by Paula Jorde Bloom offers tips to help you identify your motivation for working with young children. Bloom suggests:

- Pinpoint two people or events that you consider your motivation for working with young children.
- Describe what you thought your job would be like when you entered the field.
- Assess how adequate your training seemed to you at the time.
- Decide whether you would enter the early childhood field all over again.
- Honestly assess whether you still get something from the work you do. Is it still interesting? Does it make you feel that you are accomplishing something important?

The answers may help you get in touch with the bigger question, "What am I doing here?" When you know—without reserve—what motivates you to do your job, you sometimes feel a new wave of energy. When you think back to your first motivations, you may find it easier to meet the demands of today.

Keep it Natural!

By Karen Beaton

Classrooms for young children are filled with bright colors and plastic toys. Many of these toys are excellent and should always be a part of the classroom. But . . . consider bringing to your classroom as much of the beauty of the natural environment as possible. It will not only be beautiful and soften the elements of your classroom, but it will also foster children's learning.

Here are some reasons for using natural materials:

- * They provide opportunities for open-ended play as there is no "right-way" to use them.
- * Children will enjoy new sensory experiences as they use materials from the garden and from nature.
- * Recycled materials can be used to create interesting areas that will stimulate language and develop dramatic play.
- * Wood blocks and props can be used endlessly.

Some free or inexpensive natural materials include:

Rocks, stones and fossils—collect beautiful rocks of different sizes and textures

Seeds, seed pods and nuts—in Arkansas we have a huge variety of seeds and nuts . . . Chestnuts and pine cones to name just a few.

Gourds and pumpkins—grow or collect different gourds. Sometimes the vines will grow to amazing lengths!

Tree branches, tree slices and twigs—hang a branch in the classroom and decorate in various ways.

Flowers and herbs—peppermint, basil and rosemary are some of the herbs that are easy to grow and make a wonderful sensory addition to the class room. Dry and press some flowers and leaves.

Vegetables—create a display of beautiful seasonal vegetables, then invite the children to enjoy the display. Wash, cook and eat the vegetables with the children.

Special for Infants and Toddlers

Experiencing Trees

By Kimberly Witte

Many people do not think that you can start teaching very young children about the world around them, or about the themes or projects that the older children in the center are experiencing. However, when new ideas or concepts are approached as a normal and usual part of the infant's and toddler's day, these things can be experienced in the most wonderful of ways.

- **Take a walk:** When walking in the stroller or wagon, point out the various kinds of trees, bushes, and flowers that you see. Tell the children about the different colors, insects, and animals that are outside that day. Keep your observations very conversational and the children will not realize that they are being "taught"!
- **Take a rest:** Take a large soft quilt or blanket outside and lie down with the children under a tree. You can talk about how the leaves are blowing in the wind, the birds that are singing in the trees, or just enjoy the moment in silence.
- **Outside art:** Tape a large piece of paper around the lower base of a tree, covering all of the bark. Place a small container of crayons beside it and encourage the children to make bark rubbings. This will create a wonderful mural that you can hang in the classroom (remember to keep it at the children's eye-level).



- **How does it feel?** As leaves fall, let the children touch leaves or twigs. You can show an infant how soft a leaf is by slowly stroking it across the baby's hand. Older toddlers love stomping and kicking through the dry crunchy leaves in the fall!

Note: Infants/toddlers learn about their world by using all of their senses, especially that of taste! Be cautious and watch closely when items head toward the mouth.

Introduction to Benchmarking for Beginnings

The Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook for Three and Four Year Old Children contains benchmarks that help chart progress children make toward gaining certain skills. These are divided into **Five Developmental Learning Strands** which are:

- I. Social/Emotional Development. . . Enhances self-concept and promotes acceptance.
- II. Creative/Aesthetic Learning. . . Enhances self-expression through awareness and sensitivity to the arts.
- III. Cognitive/Intellectual Learning. . . Enhances communication, problem solving, making choices, exploring, experimenting, and questioning.
- IV. Physical Development. . . Promotes good health, nutrition, fitness, and fine and gross motor coordination.
- V. Language. . . Enhances the development of children in all areas.

Benchmarks and strategies to help children attain the necessary skills are listed in the text of the handbook. Many of you will have taken, or will be taking, the **Framework Training** that is currently being offered statewide. The Beginnings activities for this year will be referenced with the appropriate benchmarks. However, it's best to remember that many of the activities are applicable to more than one learning strand so that one activity might benefit children in many different ways. . . **All learning is connected!**

Activity: Painting with Sponges

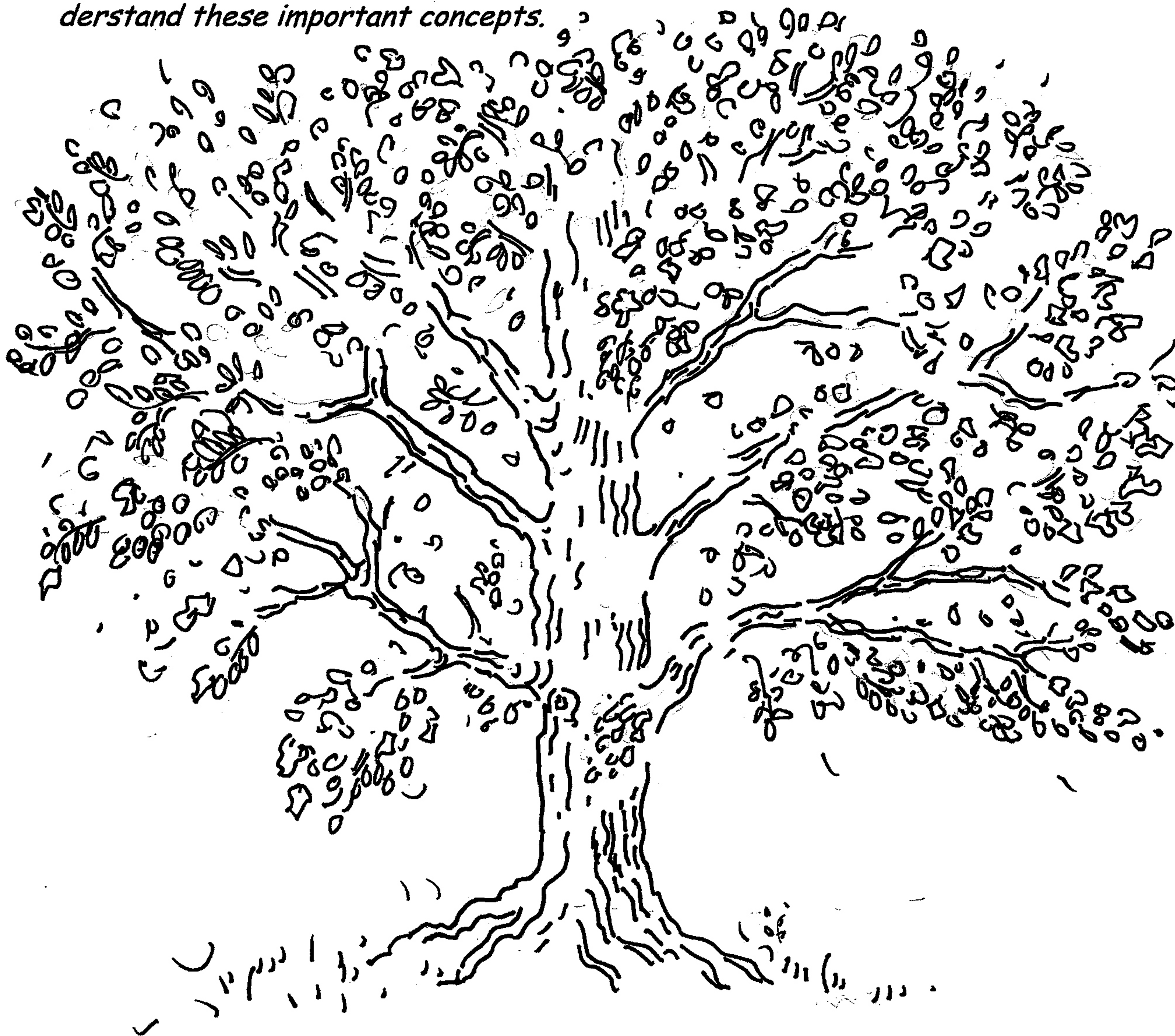
After feeling different textures, the children will experience painting by dipping wet sponges into tempera and either stamping a design onto paper or seeing how many different kinds of marks they can make with the sponge.

Benchmark: 2:12. This refers to *Strand 2 Creative/Aesthetic Learning*. The benchmark states, "Prepares art project and then works with care." This activity will help the child build toward this skill." It could also support 1.7 in *Strand 1 Social/Emotional Development*. "Demonstrates willingness to try new things."

Understanding Webbing—Look at a Tree!

.....

This is a follow-up on the last issue of Beginnings that had information about the Project Approach or the Topic of Studies approach to curriculum planning. It is important to go through the early planning steps of webbing what children know, determining what they want to find out and then documenting what has been learned. Using the parts of a tree to illustrate this has helped some caregivers understand these important concepts.



- Consider that the roots are what you already know.
- The trunk stands for what you want to find out.
- The leaves and branches are what has been learned.

What do Children Already Know?

.....

Trees are a very familiar part of every child's environment. Even at age three and four children have had personal experiences with trees. This is a topic of study that can be continued and re-visited throughout the year. But first, it's good to determine what children already know about the trees in their world. Here are some answers that were given by the children at the UA Nursery school when they webbed "What do you know about trees?"

Avery—wind blows it.

Kylie—when it's fall the leaves turn into color and they have roots.

Evie—they get cut down.

Thomas—I got a tree that cut down, now it's a little shorter.

Makenna—maybe trees fall off if wind blows very hard.

Addison—trees grow from seeds.

Aly—a cat in a tree.

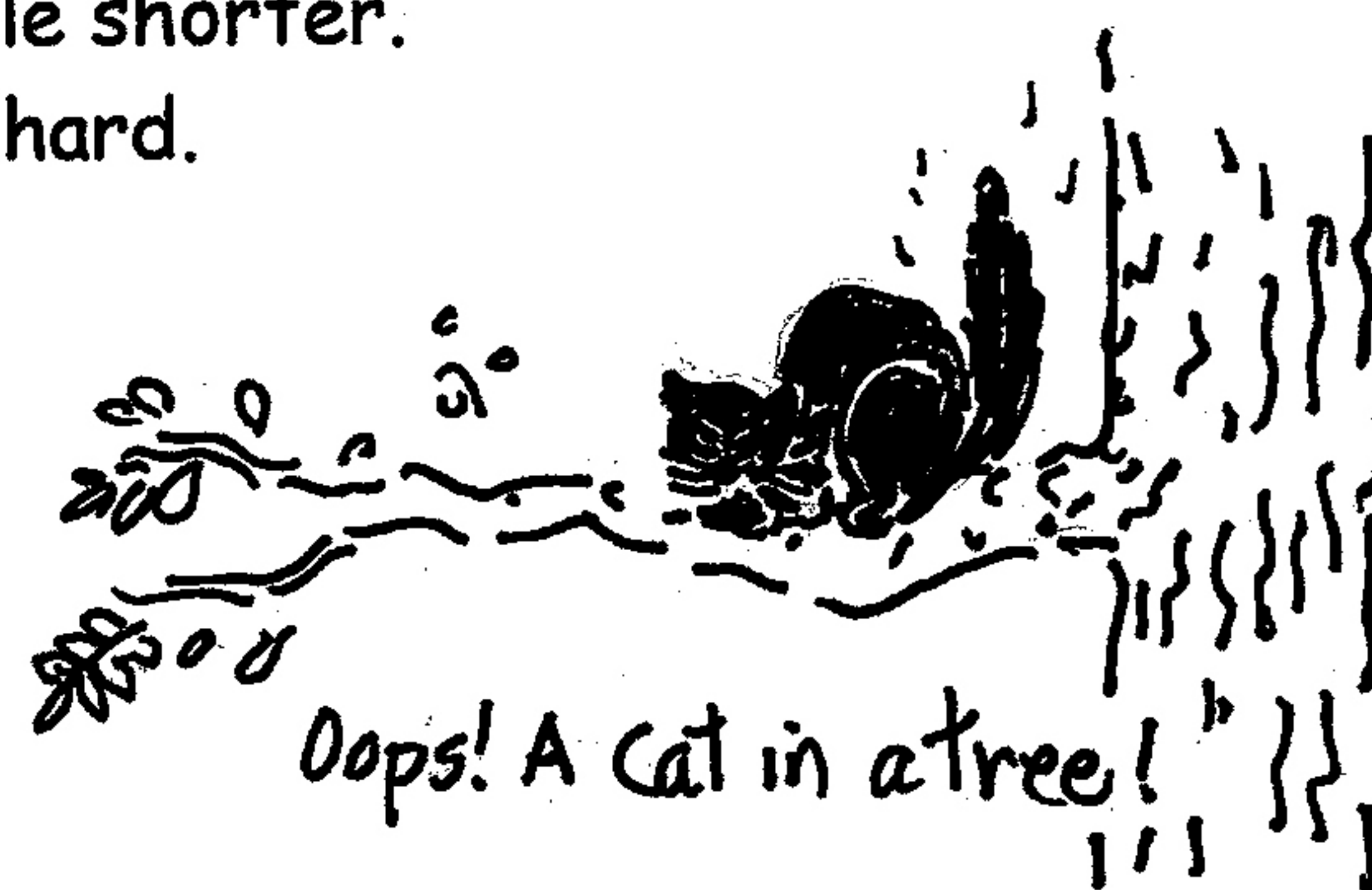
Ethan—trees need soil to grow.

Harris—acorns fall off of them

Daniel—trees grow apples.

Emma—you can swing on trees.

Joe—squirrels make their nests out of leaves.



It was also determined that the children knew some of the following about trees but wanted to find out more.

Different types of trees

children named cedar, oak, pine, maple, palm, magnolia

Fruit trees

berries, plums, oranges, bananas, pears, apples, lemons, avocados, coconuts, cherries paw paws

Parts of Trees

pine cones and needles, blooms, leaves, branches, limbs, seeds, shade, flowers, bark, trunks, big roots

How weather affects trees

leaves fall off, growing, leaves change color, acorns, sap

Uses for trees

food, shade, climbing, swings, animal houses

- Children also knew that trees needed soil, water and sunlight to grow.
- When asked if they have ever climbed a tree, five said yes, eight said no,

Starting the Project— *To start the project the children visited several different trees in their neighborhood. They returned a couple of months later and revisited the trees to see if there had been any changes.*

Each time they looked at the trees and the leaves they documented what they saw by sketching, drawing and taking pictures. Throughout the year trees were incorporated into the curriculum. The seasons were observed in the life of the trees. To conclude the project the children helped put together a project book that held their sketches and photographs. This was shared with teachers and parents.



Some of the observations children made were:

Emma . . . Apple trees grow apples.

Raven. . . The leaves fall when it's fall. We swing on tress and pick apples.

They provide shade. We can climb trees.

Jake . . . Trees give you shade.

Marty. . . Berries grow on trees and then some bears eat them.

Kylie . . . Trees give you limbs for you to climb on.

Harris . . They are yellow.

Gretta. . They grow up from the ground; and they have flowers on them.

Austin , , Trees can grow higher and touch the sky.

La matic Play

There are wonderful books, poems and finger plays that feature trees. Below are a few but there are many more. Since the topic of study will extend for a "year in the life of a tree", try to locate books that will cover all the seasons, then introduce them at the appropriate season. This topic will also be a good opportunity to stock the dramatic play area with additional props.

The Apple Pie Tree

By Zoe Hall

"My sister and I have a tree that grows the best part of apple pie." The book follows two sisters as they describe a year in the life of their apple tree. In the winter it is bare and brown, but in the spring it is covered with leaves, while two robins build a nest and nurture their eggs. As the eggs hatch and the robin grows, so does the apple tree. The weather changes through the seasons providing the tree what it needs to grow. In the summer the sisters play under the shade of the tree, while a squirrel and a deer share its fruit. Then... in the fall it is finally time to make apple pie. "There is nothing as good as an apple pie you grew yourself!"

- **Visit an apple tree**

Locate an orchard, neighbor or friend who has an apple tree. Take the children to see the tree at different times of the year.

What do they see on the tree?

What do they see in the tree?

What do they see under the tree?

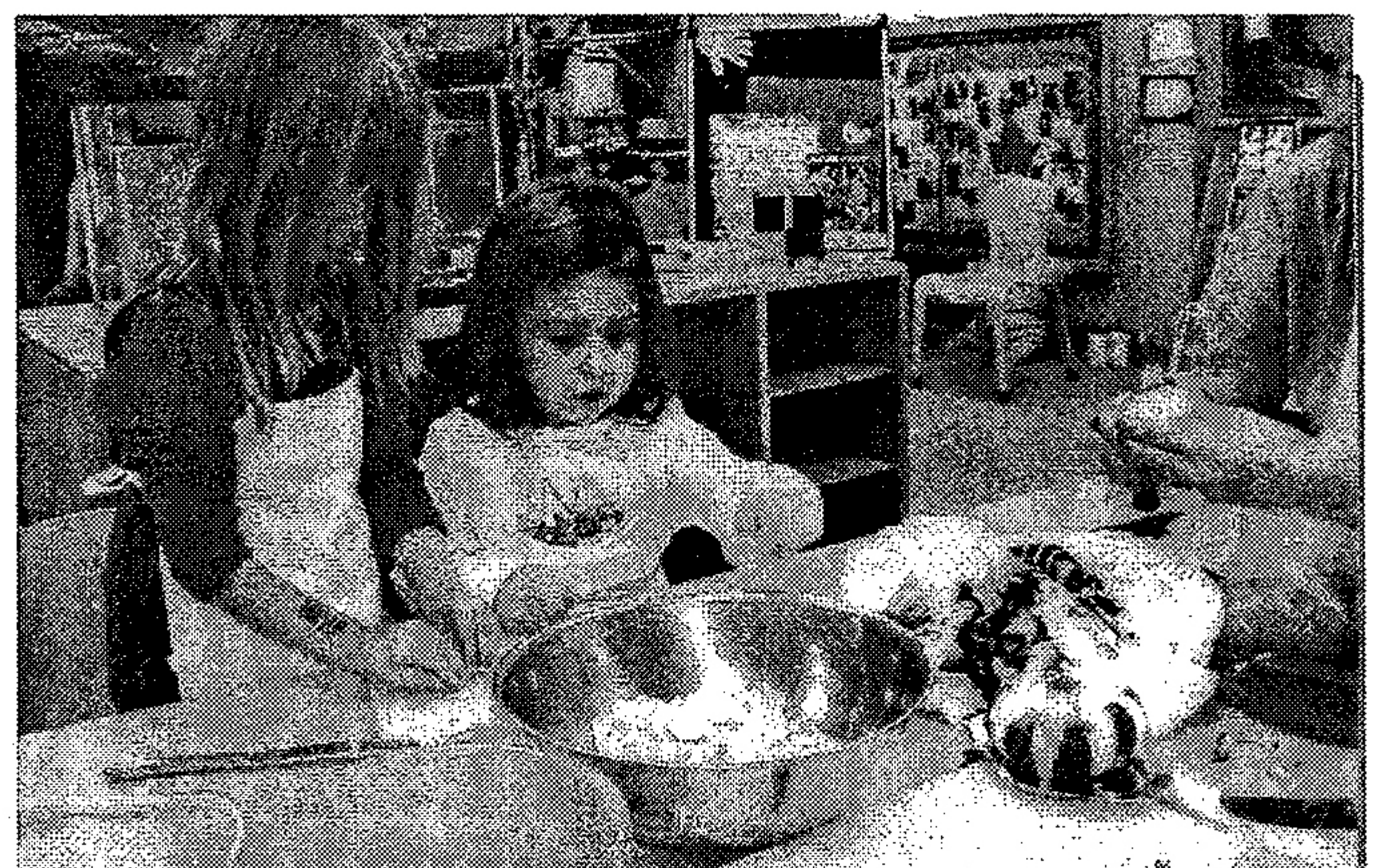
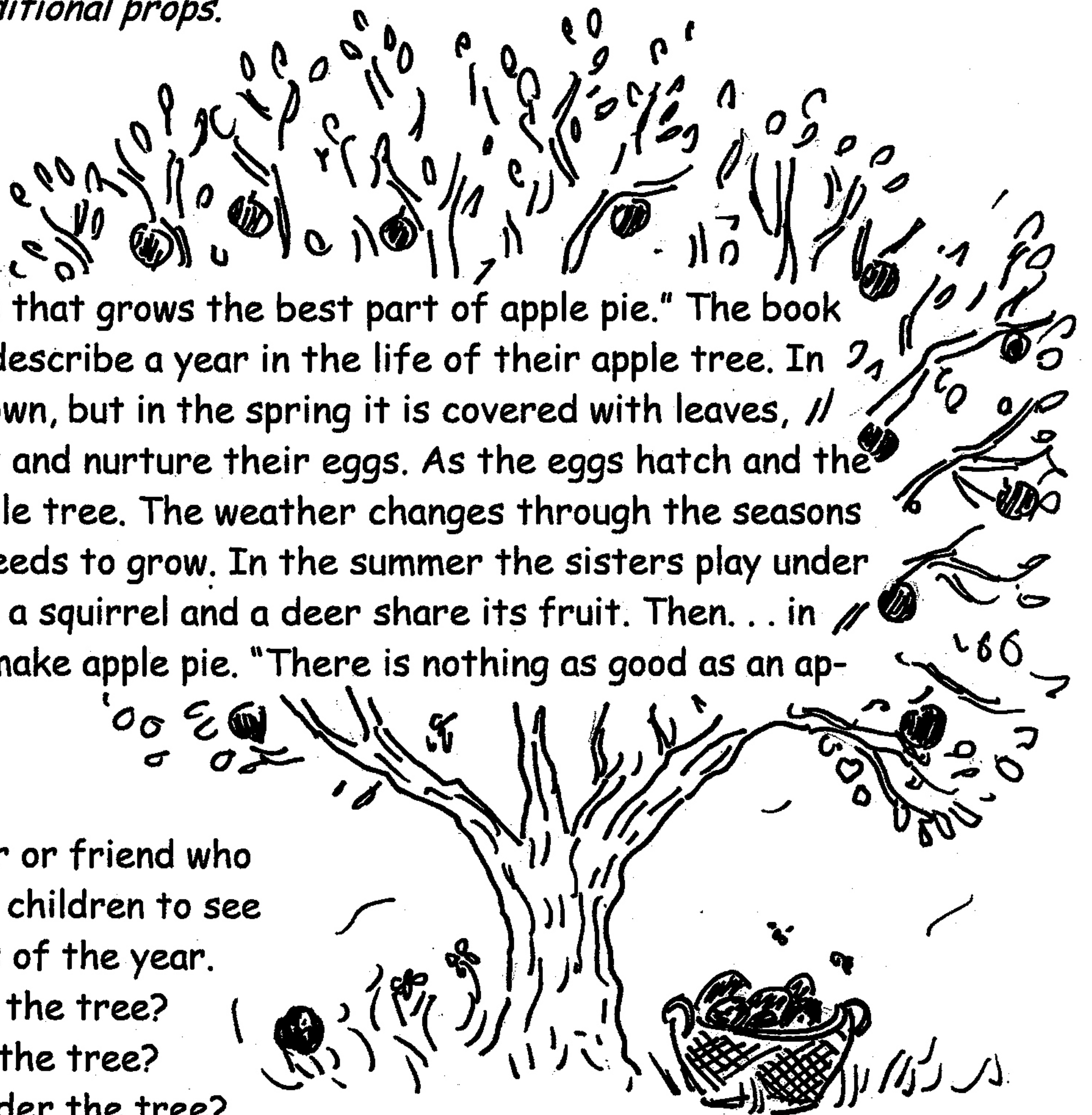
Benchmark: 3.22: Cognitive/Intellectual

Makes comparisons

- **Bake an apple pie**

A natural follow-up to this book is to let children help prepare and bake an apple pie. See page 37 for instructions.

Benchmark 1.19: Social/Emotional: Works cooperatively with others on completing a task.



Red Leaf, Green Leaf

By Lois Ehlert

This is a beautiful picture book that tells the story of a maple leaf. The opening page shows yellow leaves with a leaf shaped cutout showing a red leaf. When you turn the page, you see the red leaves with a yellow cutout. Illustrations follow a seed until it sprouts and the nursery worker takes the sprout and plants it in the ground. The book then describes what happens in each season of the tree's life. Ehlert includes information about the sugar leaf maple and how to plant a tree.



Ehlert, L. (1991). *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf*, NY: Scholastic.
 Note: Lois Ehlert has recently had a new book published.
 It is *Leaf Man*. Look for it!

- **In the fall.** . . . bring a basket of leaves and put them on a tarp or plastic rug. Let the children rake the leaves with child-sized rakes and put the leaves back in the basket. This would be even better outside!
- **Collect seeds.** . . . from a maple tree (called samaras) and use them as helicopters. Hold them up high and watch as they spiral down.
- **Rake leaves and sing a song.** . . . (tune: *Buffalo Gals*)

As I was walking down the street,
 down the street, down the street;
 As I was walking down the street, some pretty leaves did I spy.

So I raked them in a pile, in a pile, in a pile;
 So I raked them in a pile, So high, so high, so high.

Vernoice Baldwin

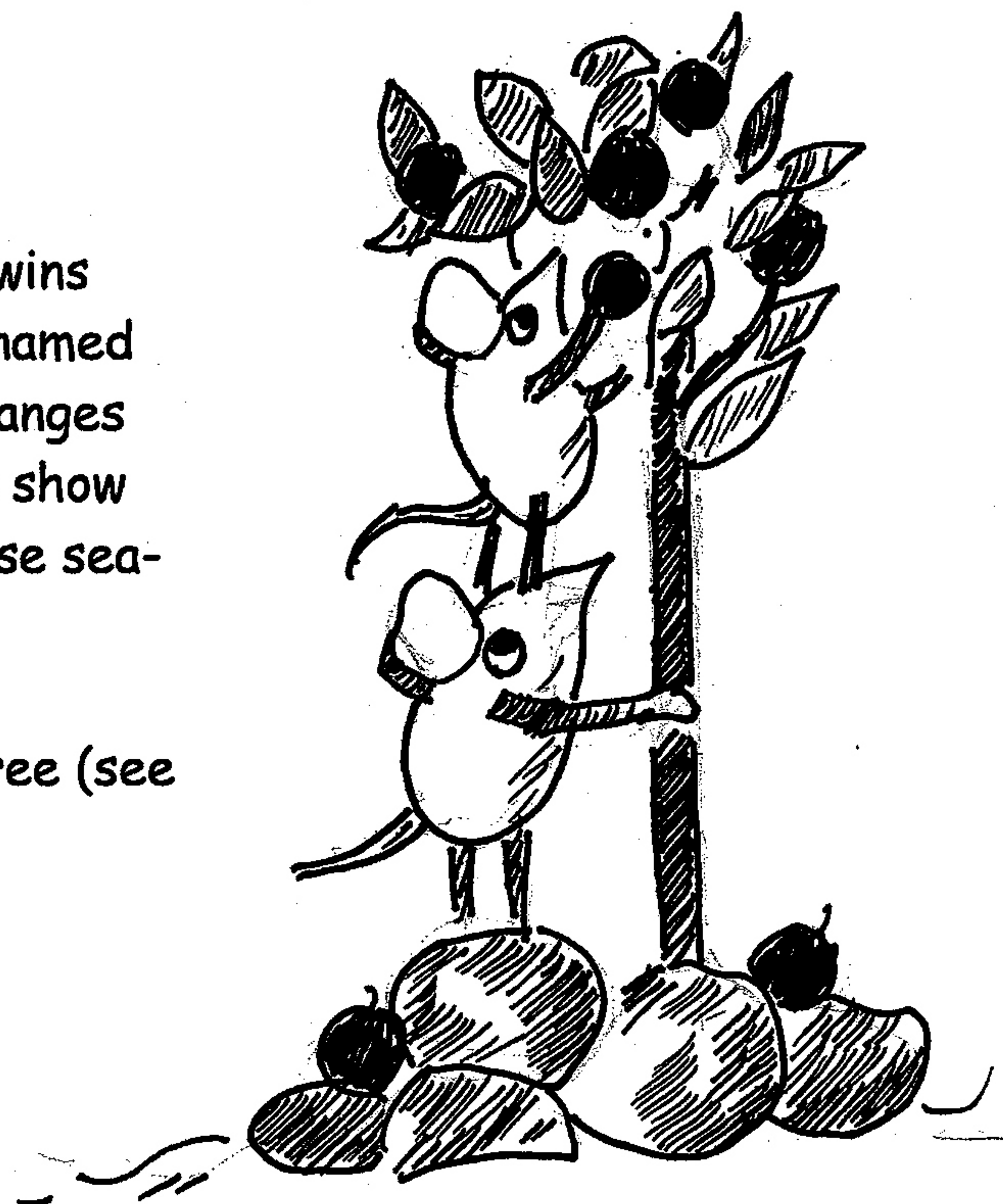
A Busy Year

By Leo Lionni

This book begins on the first day of January with twins Willie and Winnie Mouse discovering a talking tree named Woody. Each month they watch as Woody makes changes and the seasons come and go. This is a good book to show all the seasons and the changes in a tree during those seasons.

- Read this book after you have adopted a class tree (see page 26).

Lionni, Leo (1992). *A Busy Year*. NY: Scholastic



Owl Babies

By Martin Waddell

Martin Waddell writes about children's emotions. This book is about three baby owls who fear their mother might not come home. They wake up, their mother is gone and they begin to wonder where she might be and if she will come home. The tiniest owl has one line—"I want my mommy!" The mother does come back, and the babies are so joyful! The illustrations show the woods and the tree where the owl babies live.

Waddell, Martin (1975). *Owl Babies*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press.

- **Conversation.** . .Talk about who lives in trees and how the nests are made. It is especially good to use when children are having difficulty separating from parents. Have children review the four seasons.

Benchmark 5.10: Language: Follows directions in sequence.



Poems and Fingerplays

Way up High in the Apple Tree

Way up high in the apple tree.

(point with one hand up in the air)

Two little apples smiled at me.

(hold two fists up high)

I shook that tree as hard as I could.

(pretend to hold the tree with both hands and shake it).

Down came the apples.

Yum.m.m.m.m. Were they good!

traditional



If I Were a Bird

If I were a bird, I'd sing a song

And fly around all day long

(hook thumbs together and flap the hands like wings.)

And when it's night time; go to rest.

(Put hands together and rest head on hands with eyes closed.)

Safe inside my cozy nest.

(Cup both hands together to form the nest.)

traditional



What do You Find? Or Creating a Proverb (wise saying)

"Around a flowering tree, one finds many insects"

Old proverb from Guinea.

In the spring, when trees are in bloom, go outside and stand under a flowering tree. Introduce the proverb, then encourage children to complete the proverb by what they see:

"Around a flowering tree, one finds many _____."

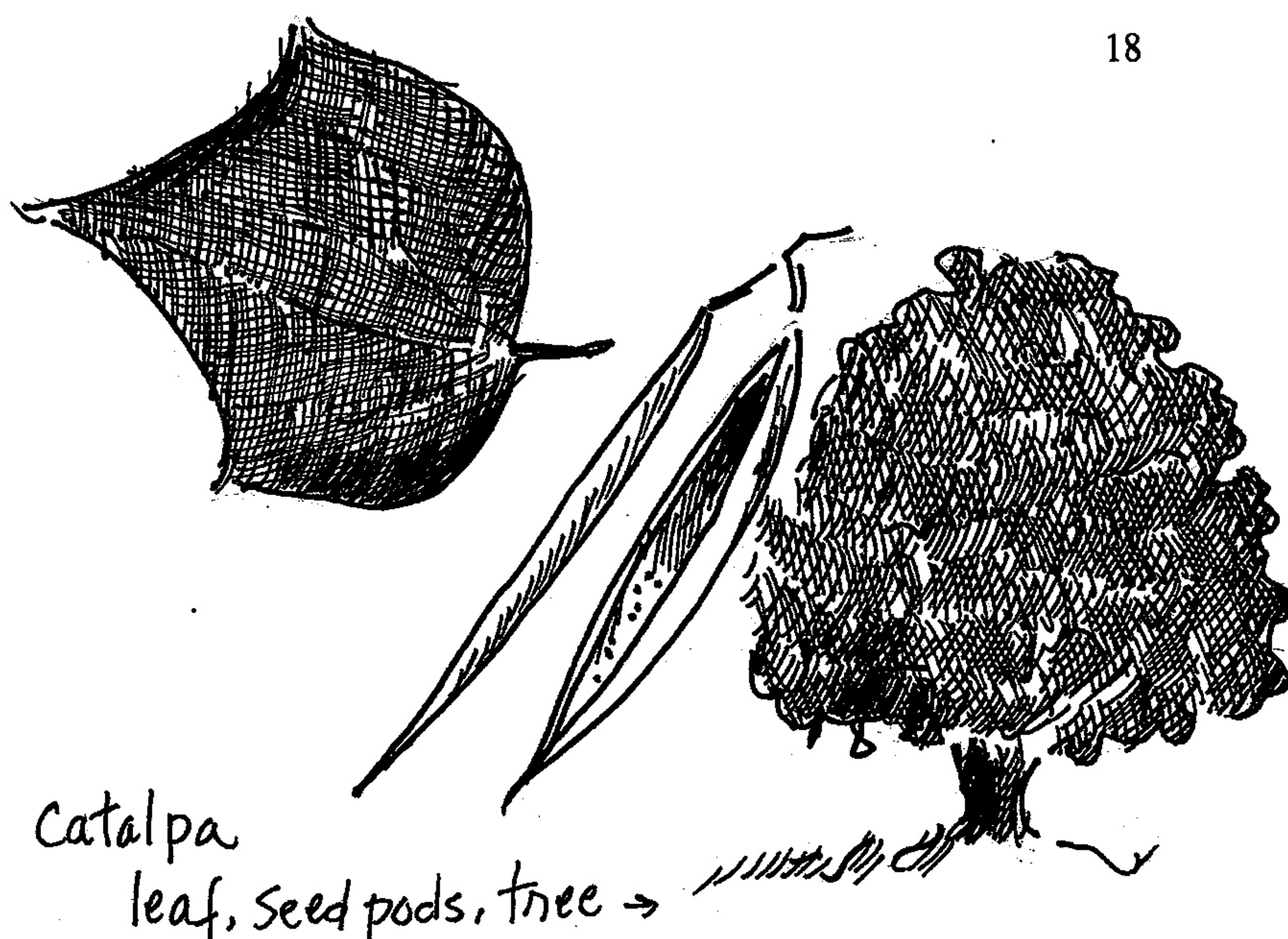
Benchmark 3:21 Cognitive/Intellectual: Uses words to describe the characteristics of objects
(scientific process: communicating)

Note: Poems and fingerplays help children attain Benchmark 5.5: participates in songs, fingerplays, rhyming activities and games

Shade Trees

First I was a little seed,
Then I was a stem.
Then I grew some branches
That turned into mighty limbs.
In spring my shiny green leaves
Are sprouting all around,
And I'm a lovely shade tree,
All green and cool and brown.

Traditional



Catalpa

leaf, seed pods, tree →

We Love Lovely Trees

We love lovely trees. . .

They have such great big limbs.

- Limbs can hold a swing,
- Limbs that we can climb,
- Limbs where birds build nests

We love lovely trees,

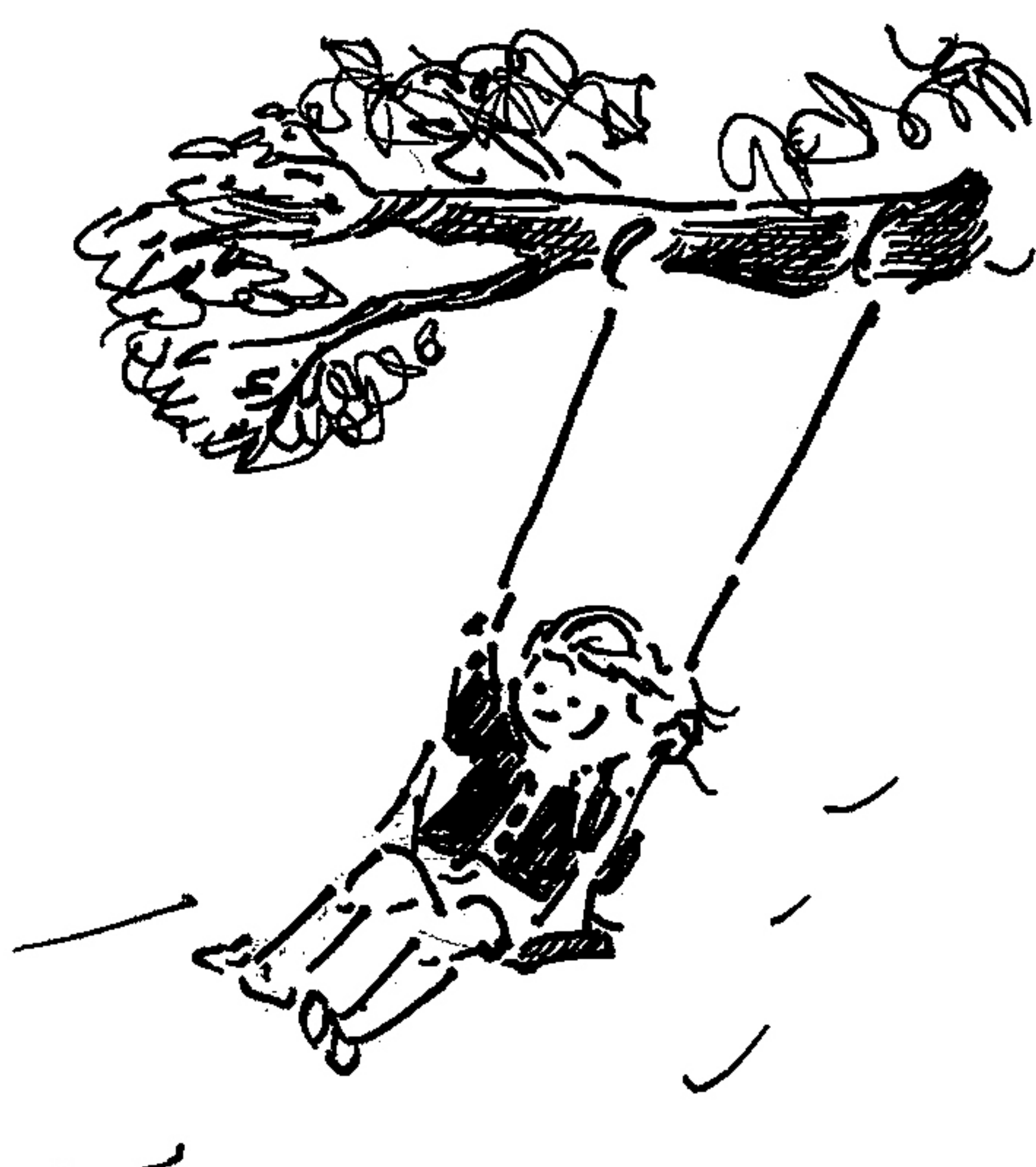
They have such shiny leaves,

- Leaves that rustle in the wind
- Leaves that spin and spin and spin.

(encourage children to think of other reasons
why trees are lovely)

Laverne Nelson

*Benchmark 5.6: Language: Uses words to communicate
ideas and feelings.*



Five Red Apples

Five red apples hanging in a tree (*Hold up five fingers*)

The juiciest apples you ever did see.

The wind came by and gave an angry frown (*Fingers flutter downward*)

And one little apple came tumbling down (*One finger falls*)

Four red apples, hanging in a tree,

(*Continue until no apples are hanging in the tree*)

traditional

*Benchmark 3.16 Cognitive/Intellectual: Demonstrates an understanding of addition and subtraction
using manipulatives.*

Dramatic Play

Plant an Orchard

Plan and create a "fruit orchard" in the dramatic play area.

You will need:

- several buckets of sand
- tree branches (trees)
- art materials such as paper, markers, scissors, tape & string

Stick the tree branches into the buckets of sand. Space them as if they were in an orchard. Use the art materials to make and add leaves, blooms and/or fruit to the trees. Attach them with tape or string. Children should feel free to "decorate" the tree with whatever fruit they come up with, even if it doesn't resemble a fruit they have ever seen.

- At a table children can pretend to wash, prepare and cook with the fruits. Include baskets, buckets, pie tins, rolling pins, and of course play fruit.
- Include props for taking care of the orchard such as rakes, baskets to pick the fruit, and other gardening supplies.
- Plant a real fruit tree.

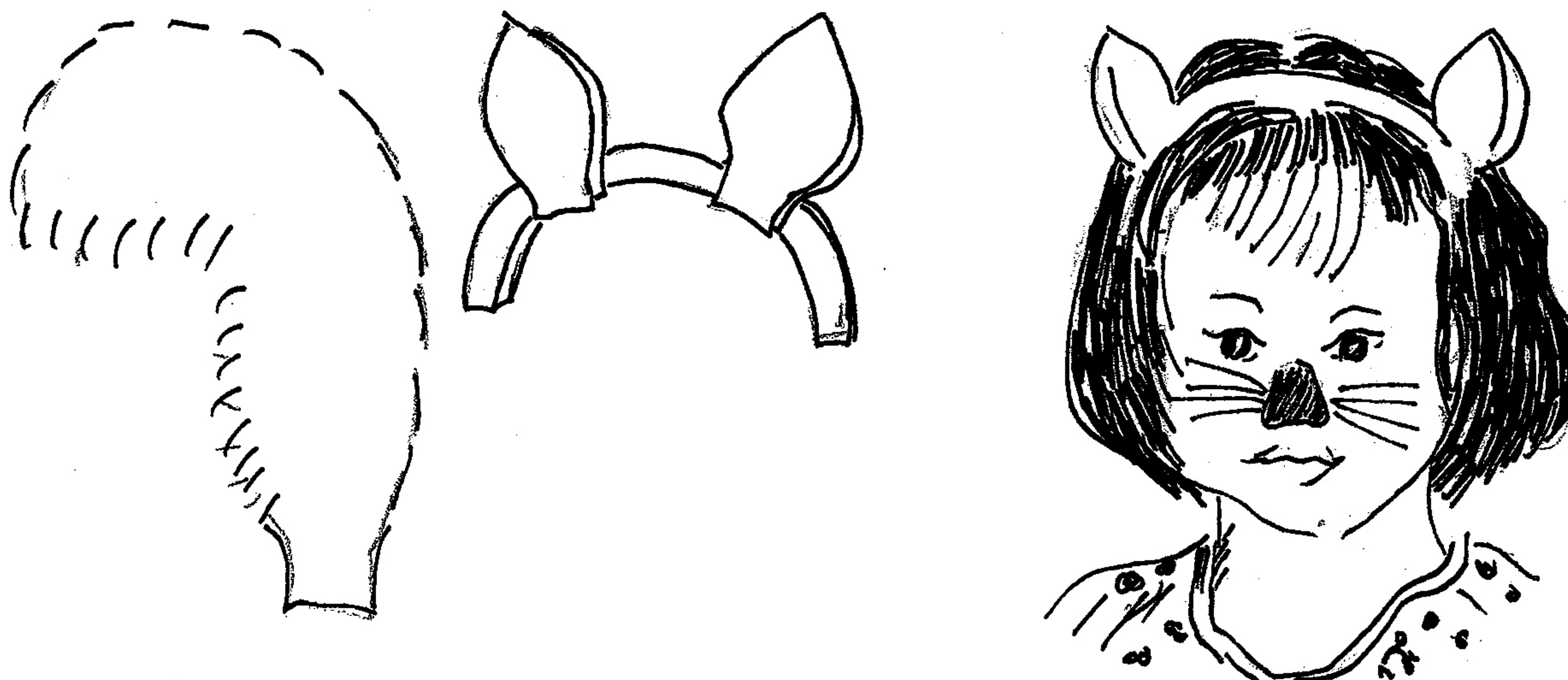
This could easily expand into the creation of a fruit stand!

Benchmark 1.8, Social/Emotional: Uses planning in approaching a task or activity.



Squirrels at Play

Make squirrel costumes by creating ears and tails out of construction paper (*see ideas below*).



Draw a nose and whiskers on with face paint or washable markers.

Let children pretend to be squirrels in the classroom or on the playground. Scatter acorns, nuts and leaves for them to gather.

Benchmark 2.3: Creative/Aesthetic: Assumes various roles in dramatic play situations.

Benchmark 2.1 Creative/Aesthetic: Shows creativity and imagination in play with materials and props.

Gray Squirrel, Gray Squirrel

When children have prepared squirrel costumes, teach them this song and movements.

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail,
Wrinkle up your little nose,
Hold a nut between your toes.
Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Swish your bushy tail!



MUSICAL ADAPTATION: Give each child a maraca or a tambourine. Encourage them to shake the instrument to the rhythm of the words, touching their toes and their noses to each of the appropriate parts.

Benchmark 2.7: Creative/Aesthetic: Experiments with a variety of musical instruments and sound sources.

Music & Movement

Trees make music! Stand under several trees on a windy day and you will hear all sorts of sounds, and although firmly planted with roots underneath the ground, trees really move! Trunks sway back and forth and limbs and branches create patterns of rhythms as they move to and fro. Celebrate the lives of trees by sharing some of the following tree-related songs and activities with the children.

I Had a Little Nut Tree

I had a little nut tree, Nothing would it bear.
But a silver nutmeg and a golden pear.
The King of Spain's daughter, Came to visit me.
And all for the sake of my little nut tree.
I skipped over water, and danced over sea.
And all the birds in the air couldn't catch me.

Traditional



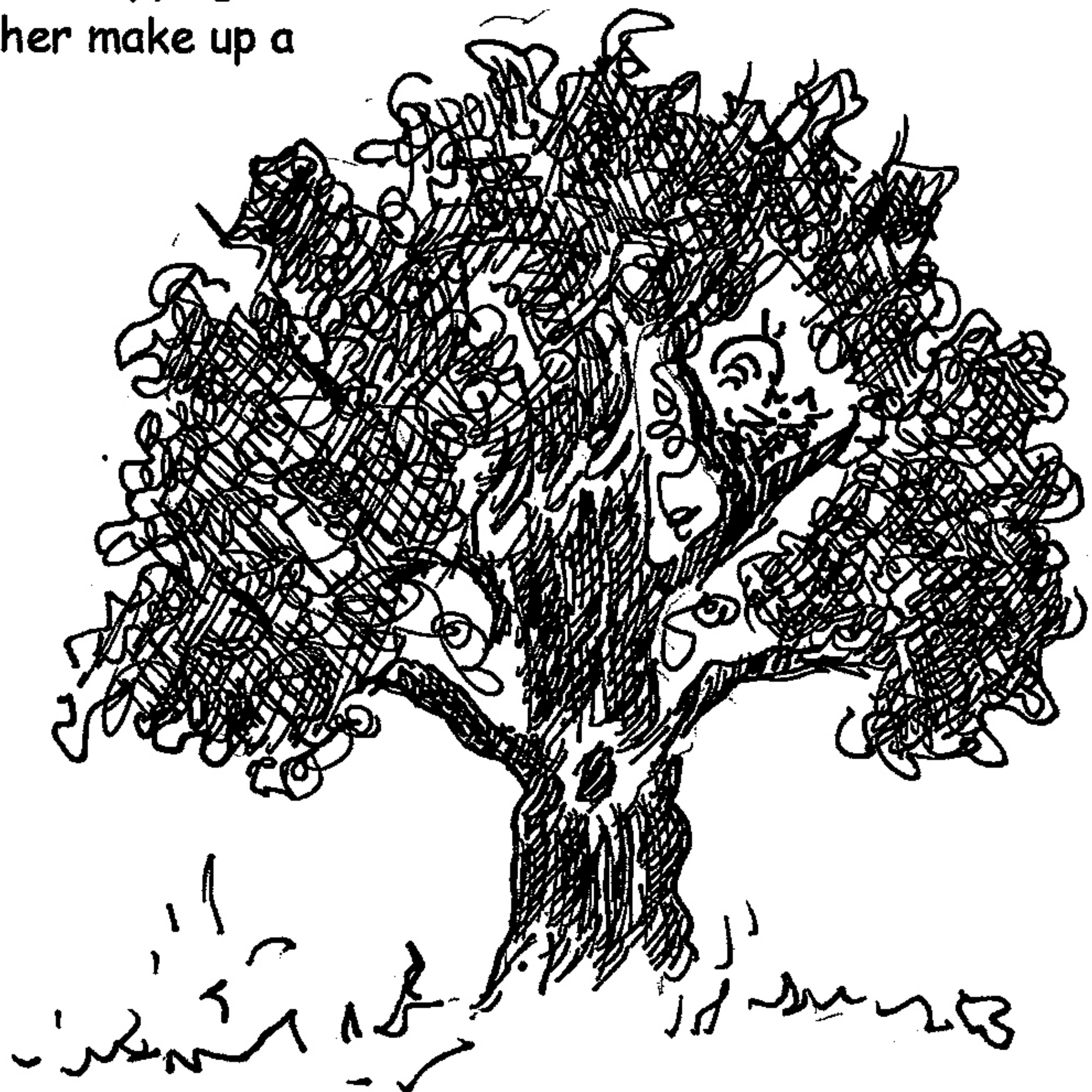
Note: This is a traditional song that may or may not be familiar to you. Children should enjoy thinking of skipping over water and dancing over the sea! You can either make up a tune or say it as a chant.

The Big Oak Tree

(tune) Mulberry Bush

Here we go round the big oak tree,
Big oak tree, big oak tree.
Here we go round the big oak tree,
So early in the morning.

Look up high and see the squirrel.
See the squirrel, See the squirrel,
Look up high and see the squirrel,
Hiding in his nest.



- Encourage children to think of other things they might see in the big oak tree.
- Benchmark 2.4: Creative/Aesthetic: participates freely in music activities.

I Am a Tree!

Children pretend to be trees swaying in the wind. They use their arms for branches and the teacher narrates.:

Start with gross motor activity:

As I was walking down the street,
the wind blew so hard, it knocked me off my feet
(of course, children fall down!)

Get up and repeat.

Continue in a calm voice.

There is a gentle breeze.

The wind is blowing very slowly.

Now the wind is getting stronger and stronger.

The branches are really moving. It is a storm!

Benchmark 5.5: Language: participates in songs, finger plays, rhyming activities and games.



Make a Tree Branch Harp

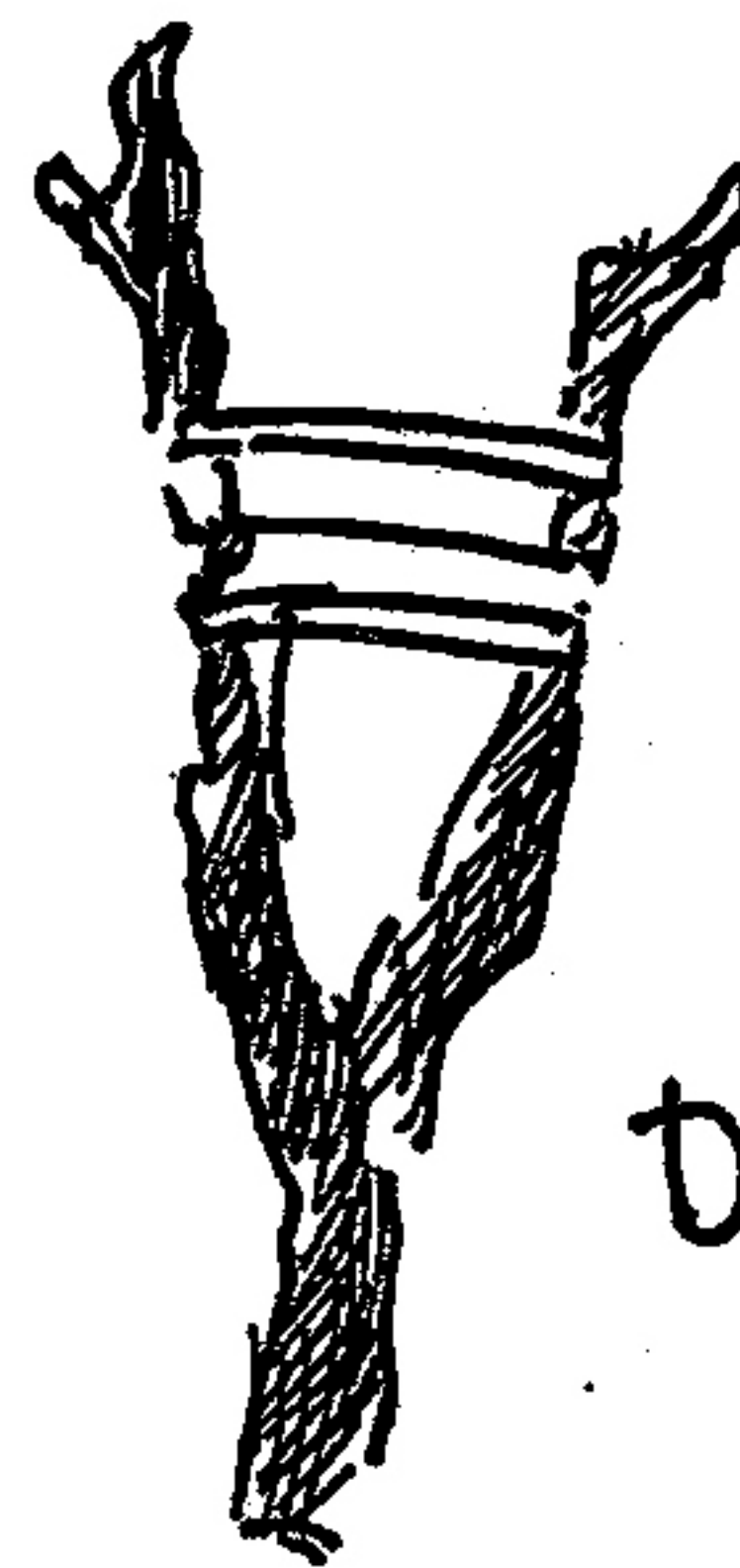
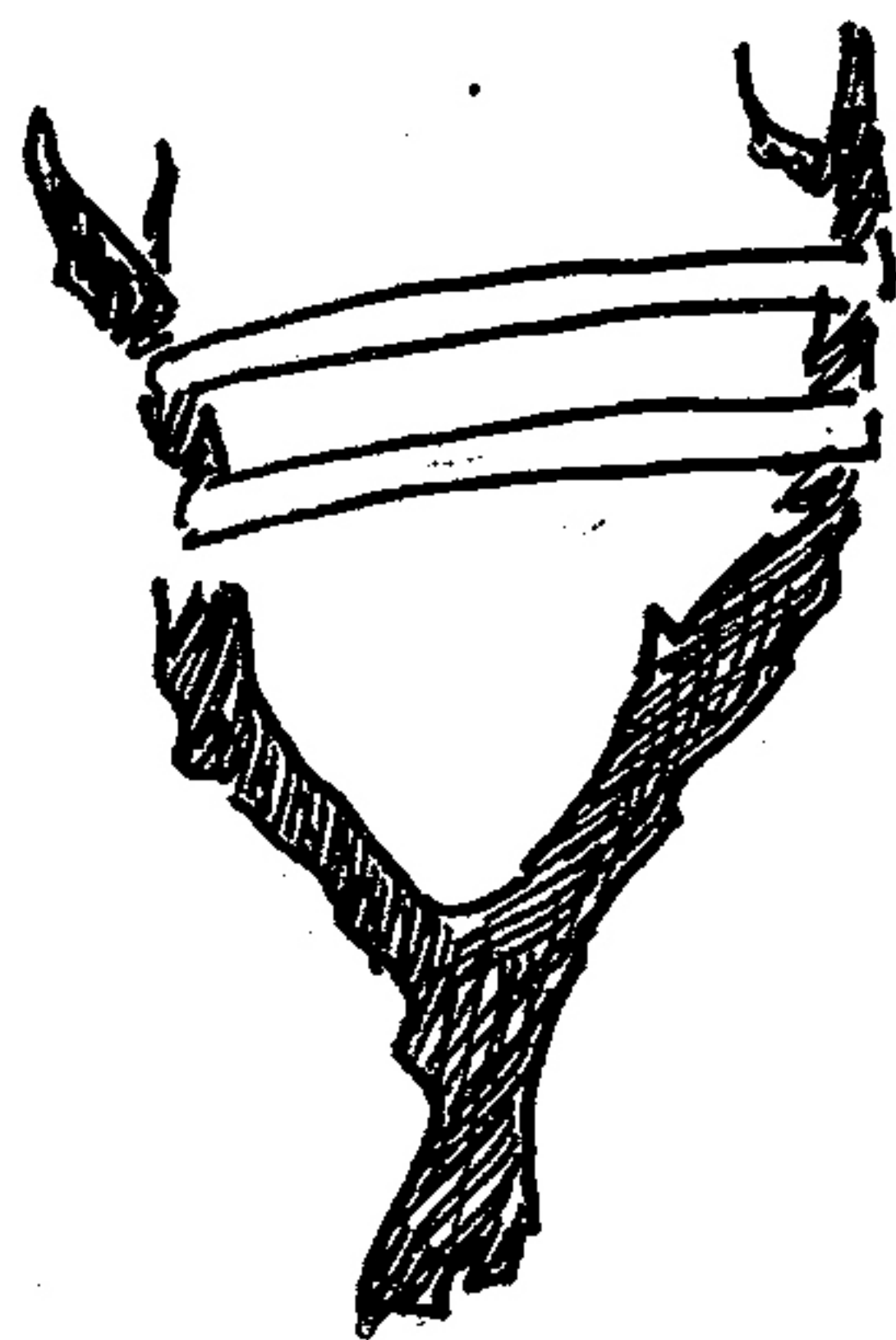
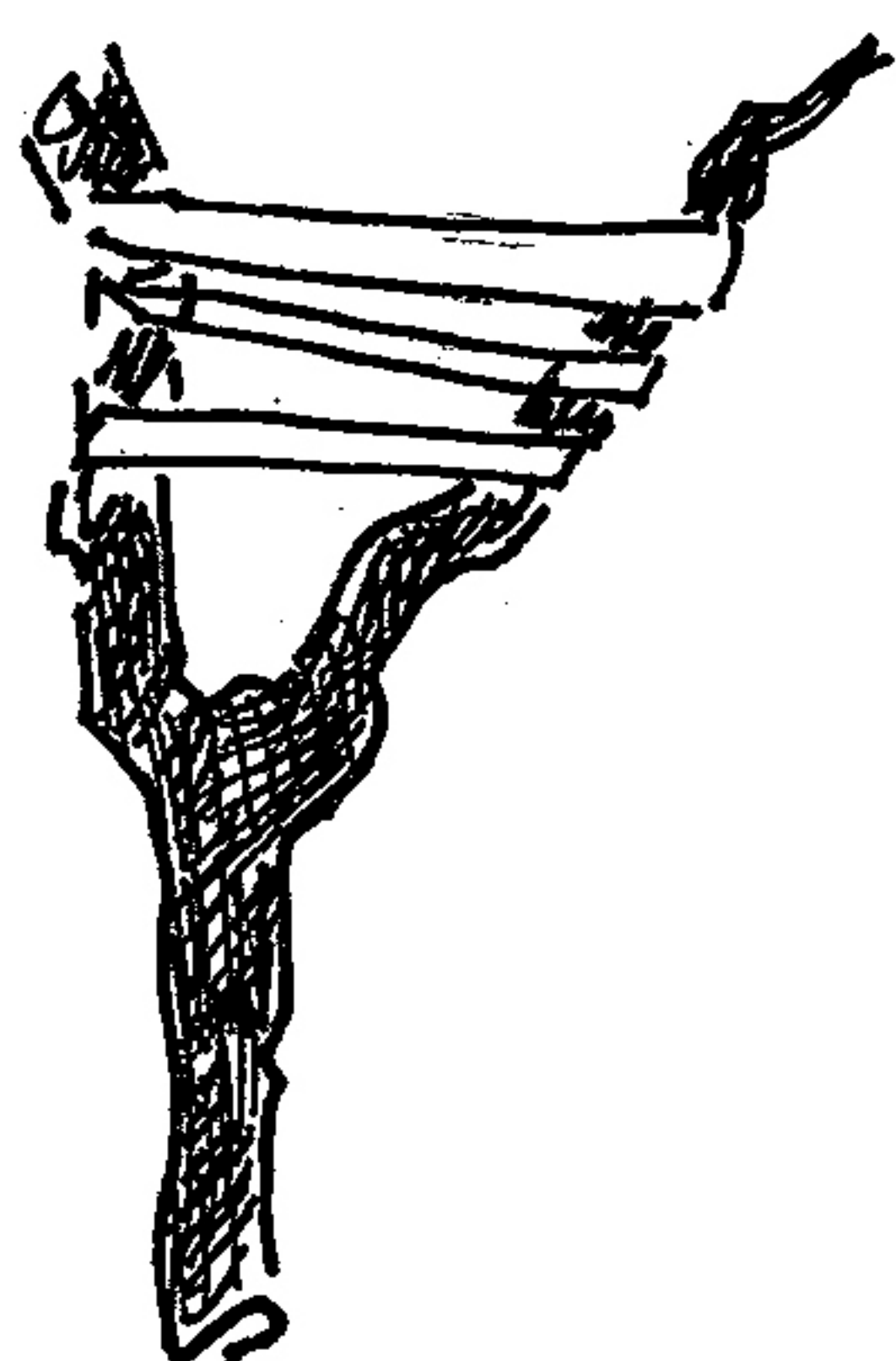
Lots of things can be made from fallen tree branches. This is a simple version of a musical harp.

You will need:

One or more tree branches in the shape of a Y

Several rubber bands in different widths

Place the rubber bands across the top of the y. Experiment with placing them closer together or farther apart. Which sounds best? Do thicker rubber bands make a different sound?



Try different
size branches.
Do they sound
different?

Benchmark 2.8: Creative/Aesthetic: Identifies the source of a variety of sounds.

Leaves on the Trees

This is a piggy-back song to "The Wheels on the Bus"

The leaves on the trees come tumbling down,
Tumbling down, tumbling down.

(Children flutter their hands and fingers down to the floor each time the phrase 'tumbling down' is repeated)

The leaves on the trees come tumbling down,
All over town.

(Children flutter hands down, then turn around)

The leaves on the trees are red, red, red,
Red, red, red; red, red, red,

(Everyone wearing red clothes goes to the middle of the circle and shakes themselves)

The leaves on the trees are red, red, red,
All over town.

The leaves on the trees are green, green, green,
Green, green, green; green, green, green.

(Everyone wearing green goes to the middle of the circle and shakes)

The leaves on the trees are green, green, green,
All over town.

Repeat for orange and yellow leaves

Benchmark 2.5 Creative/Aesthetic: Enjoys singing games, dramatizing songs and moving to music.

Two Big Lemons

Way up high, in a lemon tree (hold hands up as high as possible)

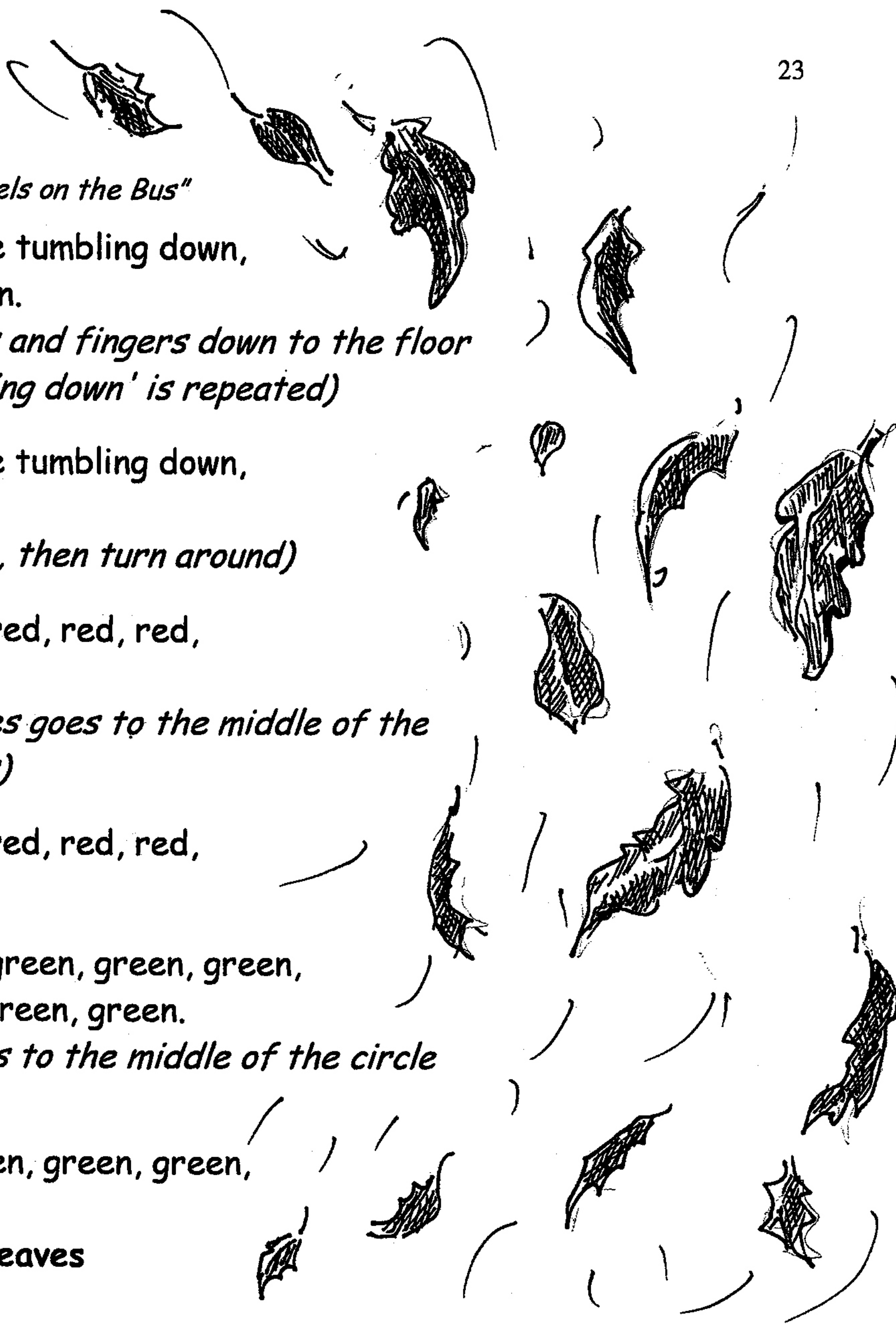
Two big lemons smiled at me (put hand on cheeks and smile)

So I shook that tree with all my power (pretend to shake a tree)

Down came the lemons, whoa, they were SOUR! (make sour face).

- Bring two lemons to class. Cut them open and taste.

Benchmark 2.5 Creative/Aesthetic: Enjoys singing games. Dramatizing songs and moving to music.

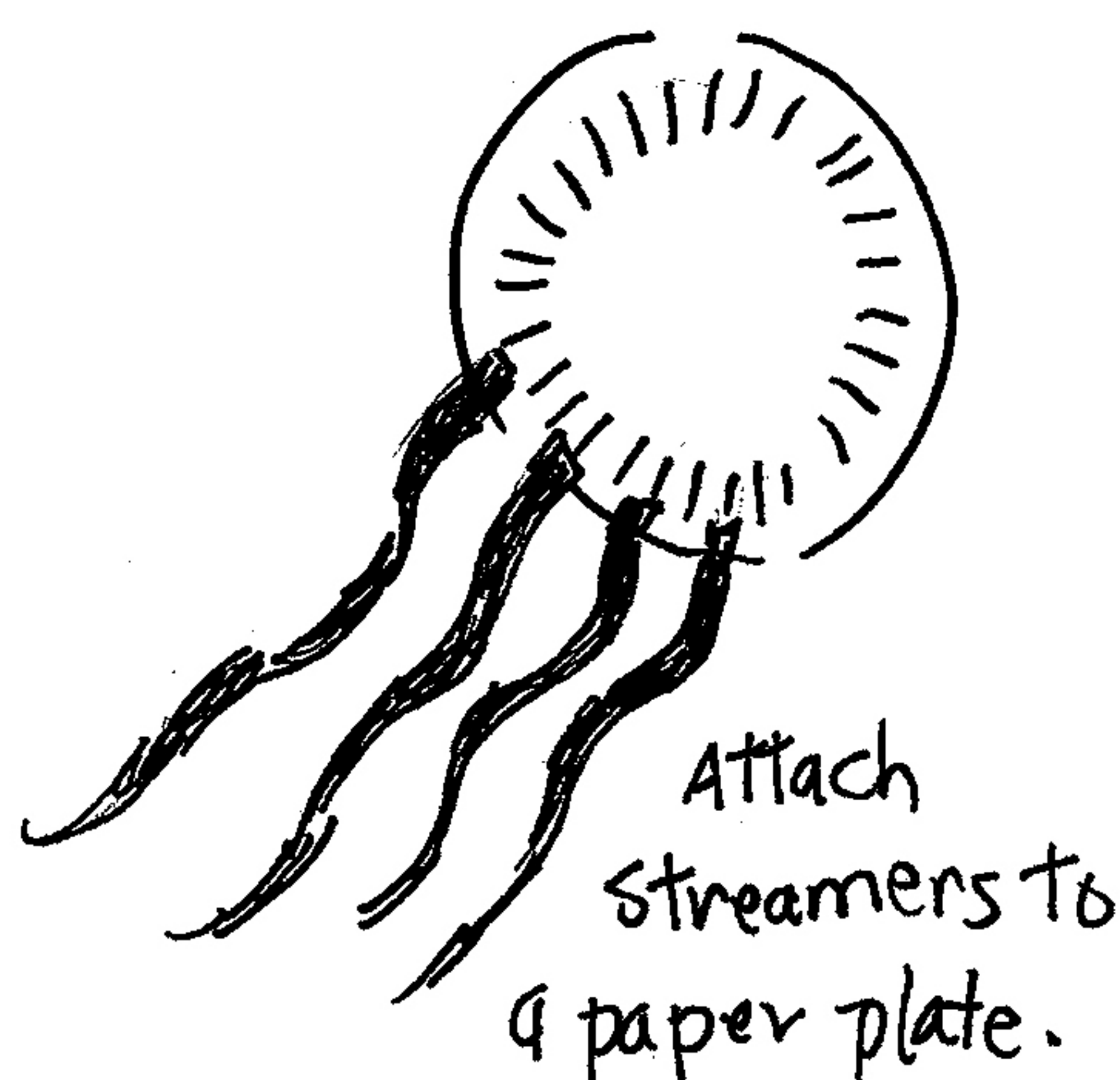


Outside Movement Activities

The outdoors is the best learning environment possible! In order to develop physical skills children need lots of time for running, playing, and using loud voices! Here are a few activities that will make outdoor time a physically-fit time.

Enjoy the Wind!

On a windy day in spring or fall, take the children outside. Take along scarves, crepe paper streamers, large sheet, parachute, or anything that will move in the wind.



- Show the children how to hold the scarf up so that the wind will pick it up and move it.
- Allow time for children to experiment with running, dancing, skipping and hopping while holding the scarves.

Benchmark 4.11 Physical Development: runs, jumps, hops and skips

Bubbles, Bubbles, Everywhere!

Bubbles are another favorite activity for outdoor play!

You will need:

a shallow pan of water filled with bubble solution
items that will make big bubbles when dipped into the bubble solution.

Recipe for bubble solution:

1 gallon of water
2/3 cup of Dawn[®] detergent
1 Tablespoon glycerin.*

Let mixture set a day and stir before using.

* Buy glycerin at a drug store.

Items for Big Bubbles:



Big Bubble Wand



Fruit basket



Hula Hoop

Benchmark 4.9: Physical Development: Participates freely in gross motor activities.

Math & Science

Trees are a part of each child's natural environment. Children come into contact with trees every day; writing on paper, enjoying a juicy apple, peeling an orange, making a pile of fall leaves, or just taking a walk. Through so many similar day-to-day experiences young children become aware of trees, and through all of their senses they learn about trees.



seeing trees



writing on paper



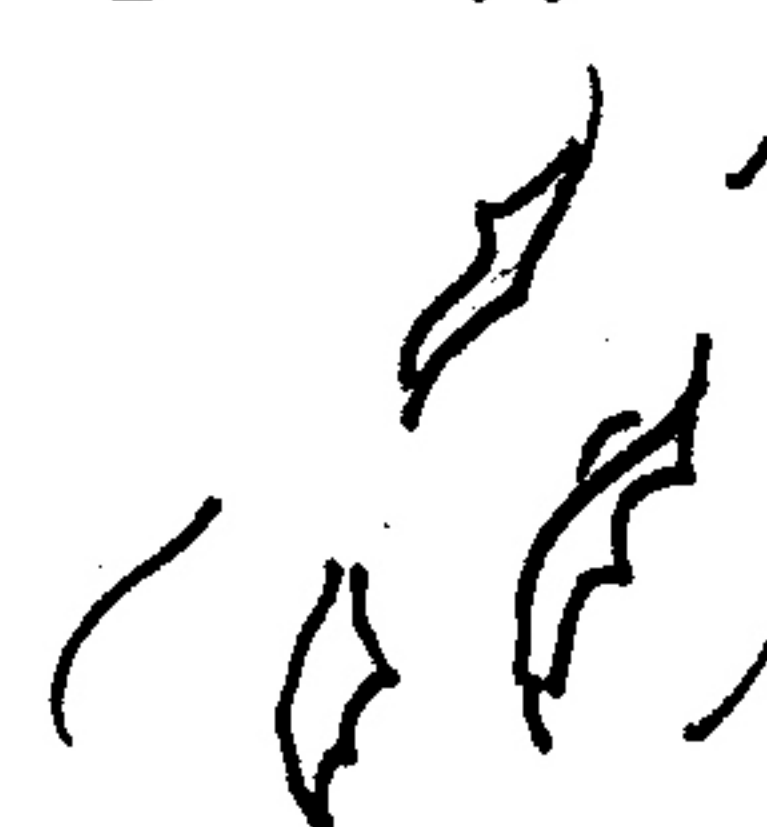
eating an apple



Peeling an orange



making a pile of leave



watching a falling leaf

Activities about trees should take advantage of children's natural inclinations to touch, smell, taste, and explore. At the same time, activities should be designed to help children: understand how trees grow, what they provide to the environment and to the animals around them, and how they benefit people.

Exploring trees in each child's life will make learning about trees much more relevant to the child's own life experience. Go outside:

- Listen to the sound of the branches in the wind.
- Can you hear the birds in the treetops?
- How does the bark feel?
- What does a leaf look like?

Help the children find answers to these questions using all of their senses.

Sketch, write and take pictures of trees!

Adopt a Tree

Adopt a tree on your playground or in your neighborhood. Have the children tie string to the tree to identify it as the class tree. Have a party/event to dedicate the class tree. Throughout the year plan activities in, under or near the tree that will help children note what happens in a Year in the Life of a Tree.

Here are a few activities to try:

- Measure how many children (with hands joined) it takes to go around the tree.

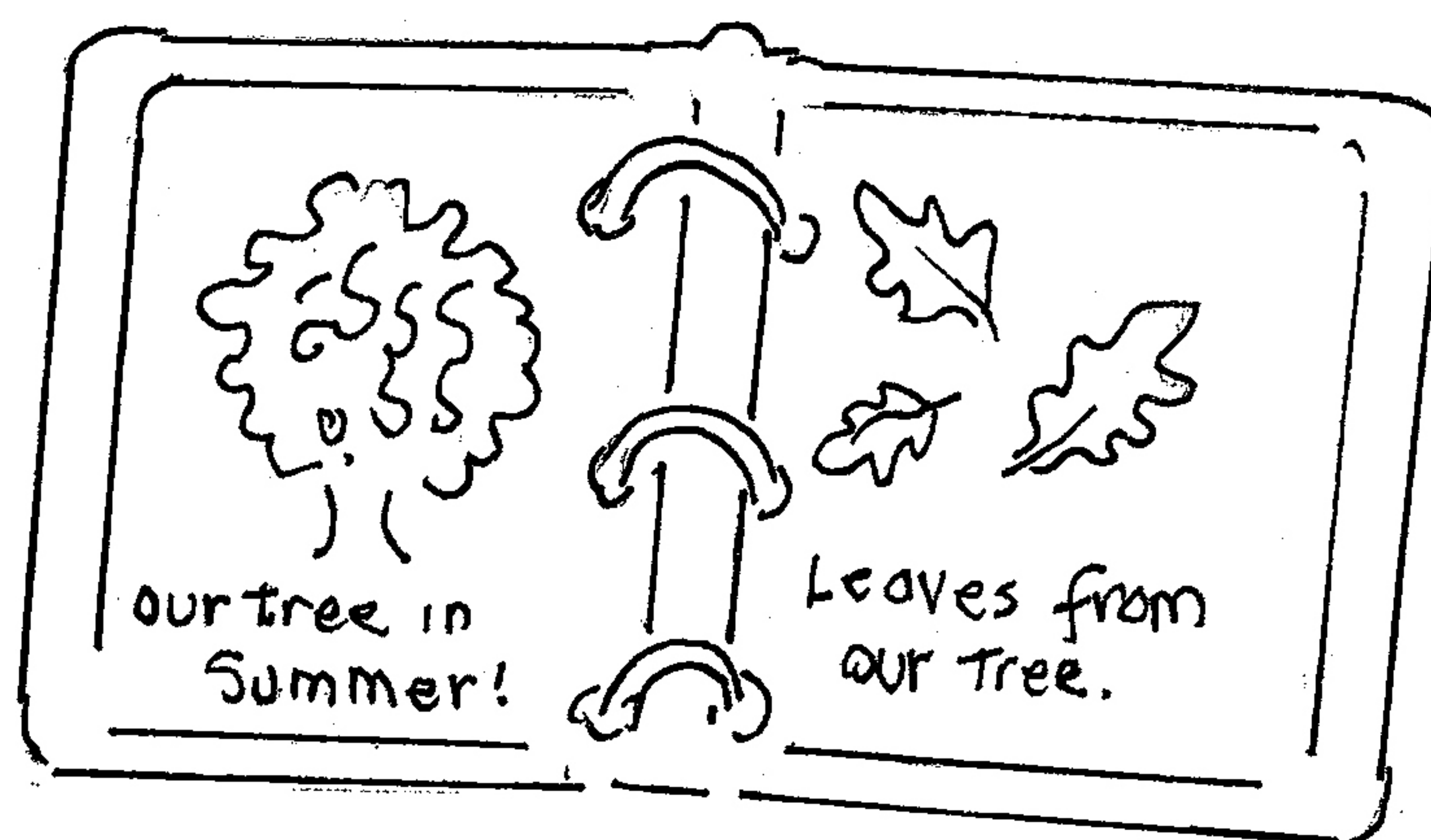


- Observe to see if any animals or insects live on or near the tree.
- Draw pictures of the tree in each season. How do they differ?
- In the fall watch the leaves turn colors; gather some to count and sort.
- In the winter let the children look for animal and/or bird tracks in the snow.
- In the spring watch as flowers fall from trees in the wind. Watch to see what appears next.
- In the summer compare grass and flowers under the tree with grass that is not under the tree.

These activities will meet many of the Benchmarks in the math/science section of Cognitive/Intellectual Learning Strand.

More Things to Do with the Adopted Tree!

- Take photos of the tree (monthly) so the children can see the tree change over time.
- Take a blanket to the tree and sit on it under the tree to read a story and have a snack. Encourage children to re-tell and dramatize the story.
- Give the tree a big hug (how does the bark feel?)
- Name the tree.
- If it has low branches, try climbing the tree.
- Add a swing if limbs are strong.
- Decorate the tree with ribbons, streamers, and things that glitter.
- Identify the tree.
- Collect leaves that fall from the tree.
- Record observations, pictures and drawings and combine them to make a book about the tree.
- Insert photos and drawings into plastic sleeves for protection.
- Place in a three-ring binder.
- Display the book where children and guests can enjoy it.



Our Class Tree!

Sorting: Is it Wood?

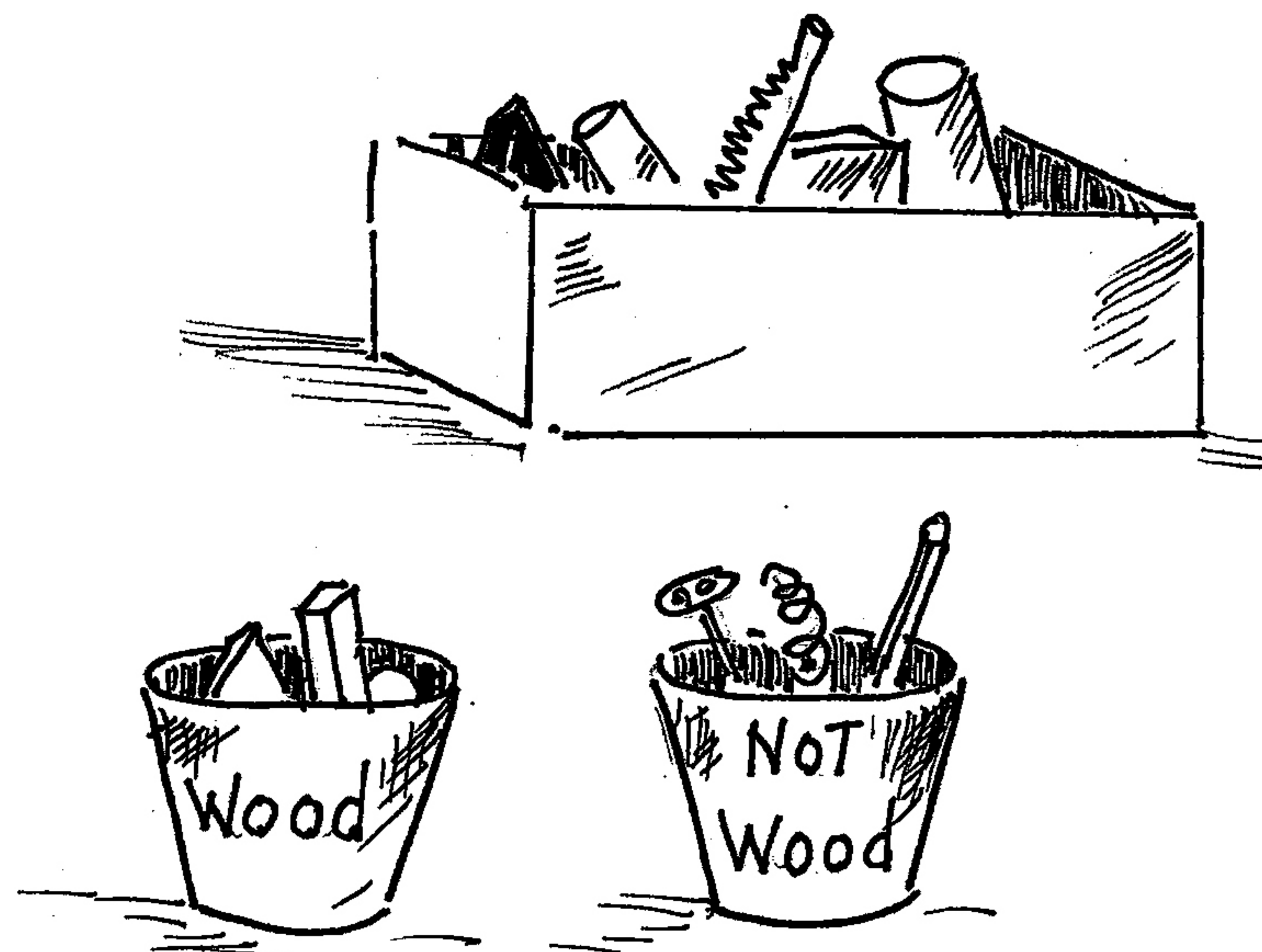
Introduce the concept that wood comes from trees and many things are made of wood.

You will need:

- A large box containing many objects some made out of wood and some objects not made of wood
- Two baskets or smaller boxes that are labeled **Wood** or **Not Wood**.

Talk to the children about the many products we use everyday that are made from wood.

Ask them to sort items into either wood or not wood.



Benchmark 3:11: Cognitive/Intellectual: Classifies objects conceptually (things that go together).

Plant a Tree!

Many children do not realize that ordinary seeds such as those found in fruit will actually sprout and produce a tree!

- Have children plant fruit seeds such as lemon, orange, grapefruit, seeds in small pots of potting soil.
- Place where children can observe growth of their baby tress.
- After they sprout, plants will need to be in a sunny window.
- Talk about what is happening to the seed and to the plant as it grows.

Benchmark 3.21 Cognitive/Intellectual. Uses words to describe the characteristics of objects (scientific process: communicating).

What's in the Box?

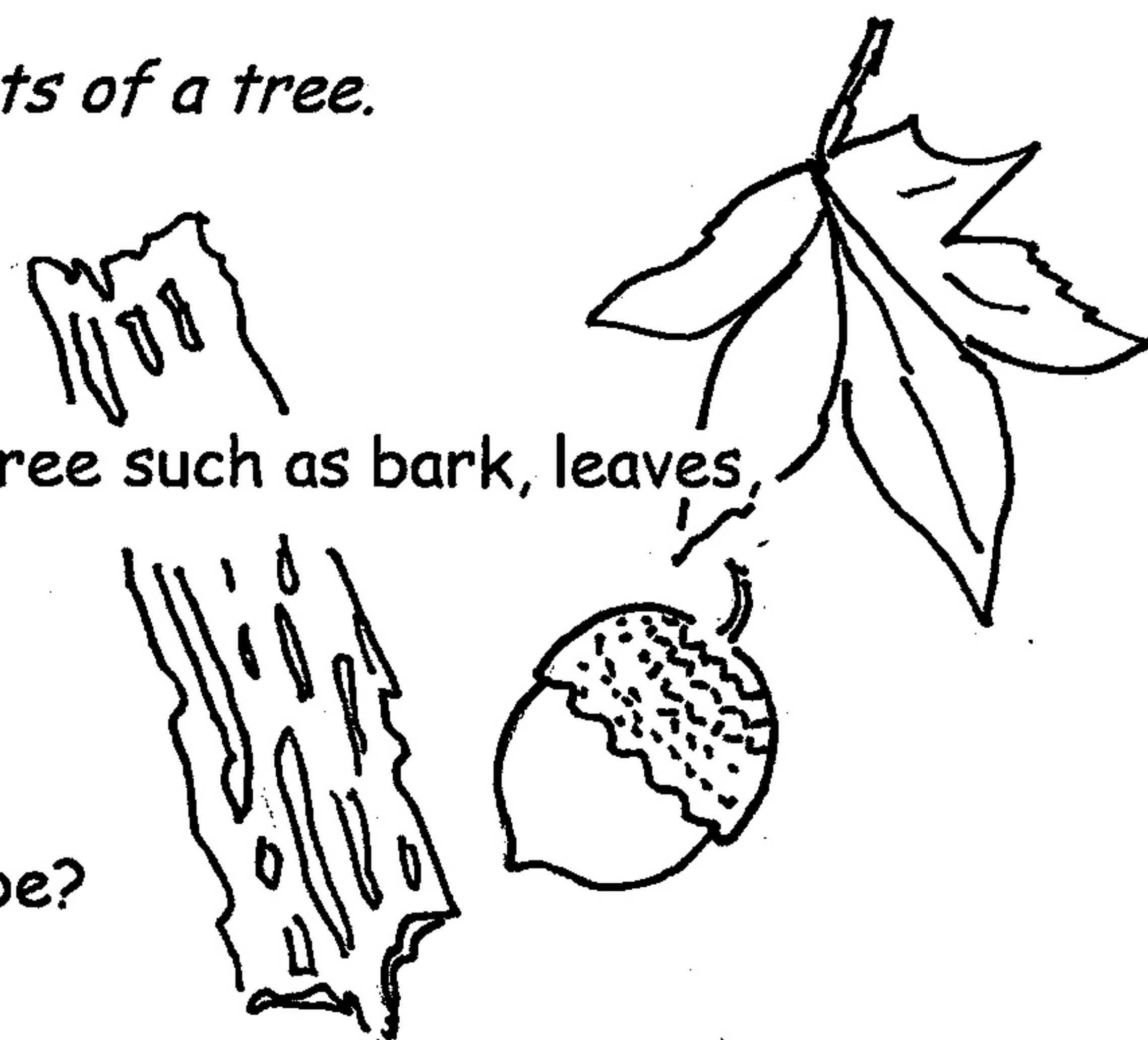
This activity will help children focus on individual parts of a tree.

You will need:

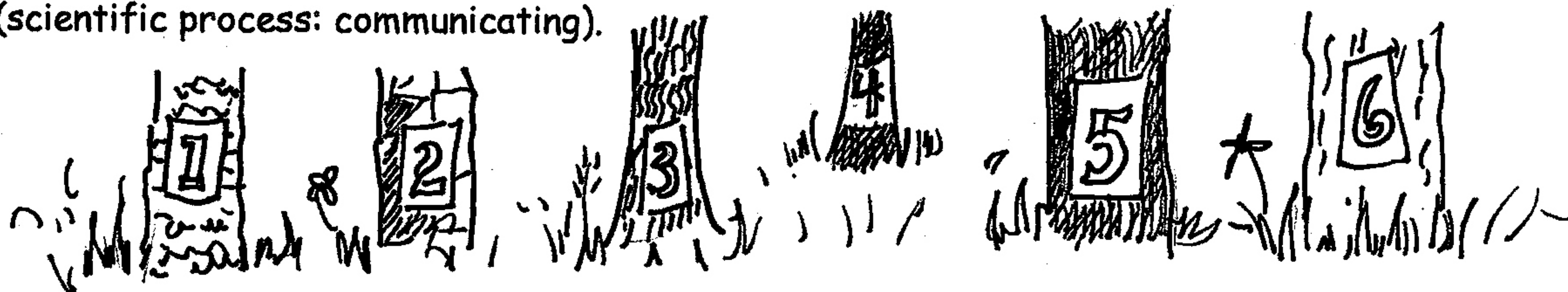
shoebox

assortment of items gathered from a nearby tree such as bark, leaves, acorns, nuts, twigs, moss or small tree roots.

- Fill a shoebox with one of the items listed above.
- Shake it and let the children guess what it could be?
- Open the box, and remove the object.
- Have the children discuss what the item is and how the tree might use it. Put a different part of the tree in the box every day for discussion.



Benchmark 3.21, Cognitive/Intellectual: Uses words to describe the characteristics of objects (scientific process: communicating).



Take a Walk-Around



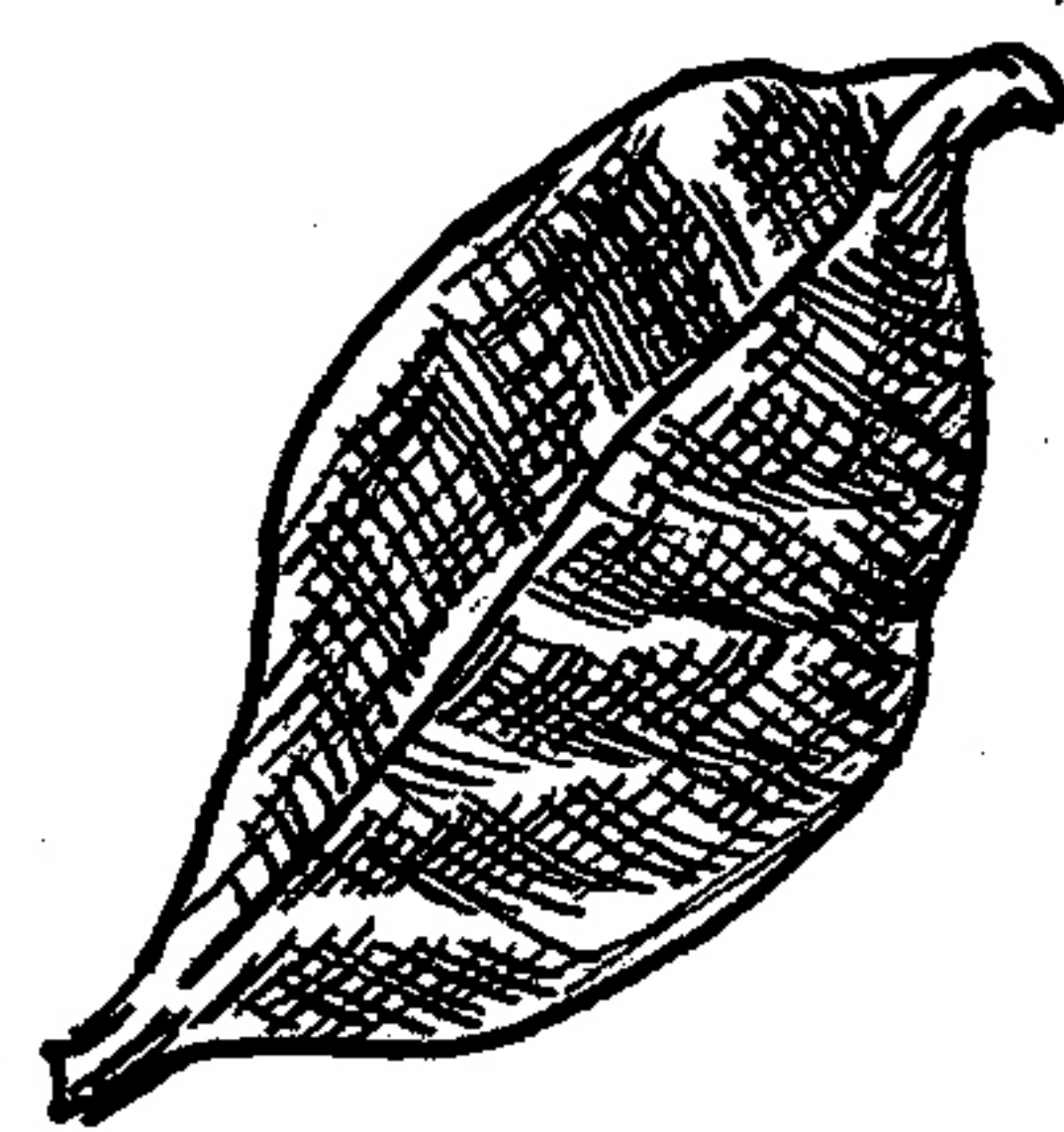
Take a walk around your playground or neighborhood, counting trees and noting where they are. Then you can:

- Put a number on each tree.
- Take pictures of different trees and identify.
- Make a rubbing of each tree's bark and compare textures.
- Make a map of the school/playground area or your neighborhood and mark where each tree is on the map. Match pictures and /or bark rubbings to the map.

Benchmark 3.20 Cognitive/Intellectual: Uses senses to learn about the characteristics of the environment and to collect data (scientific process : observing).

Graphing Leaves

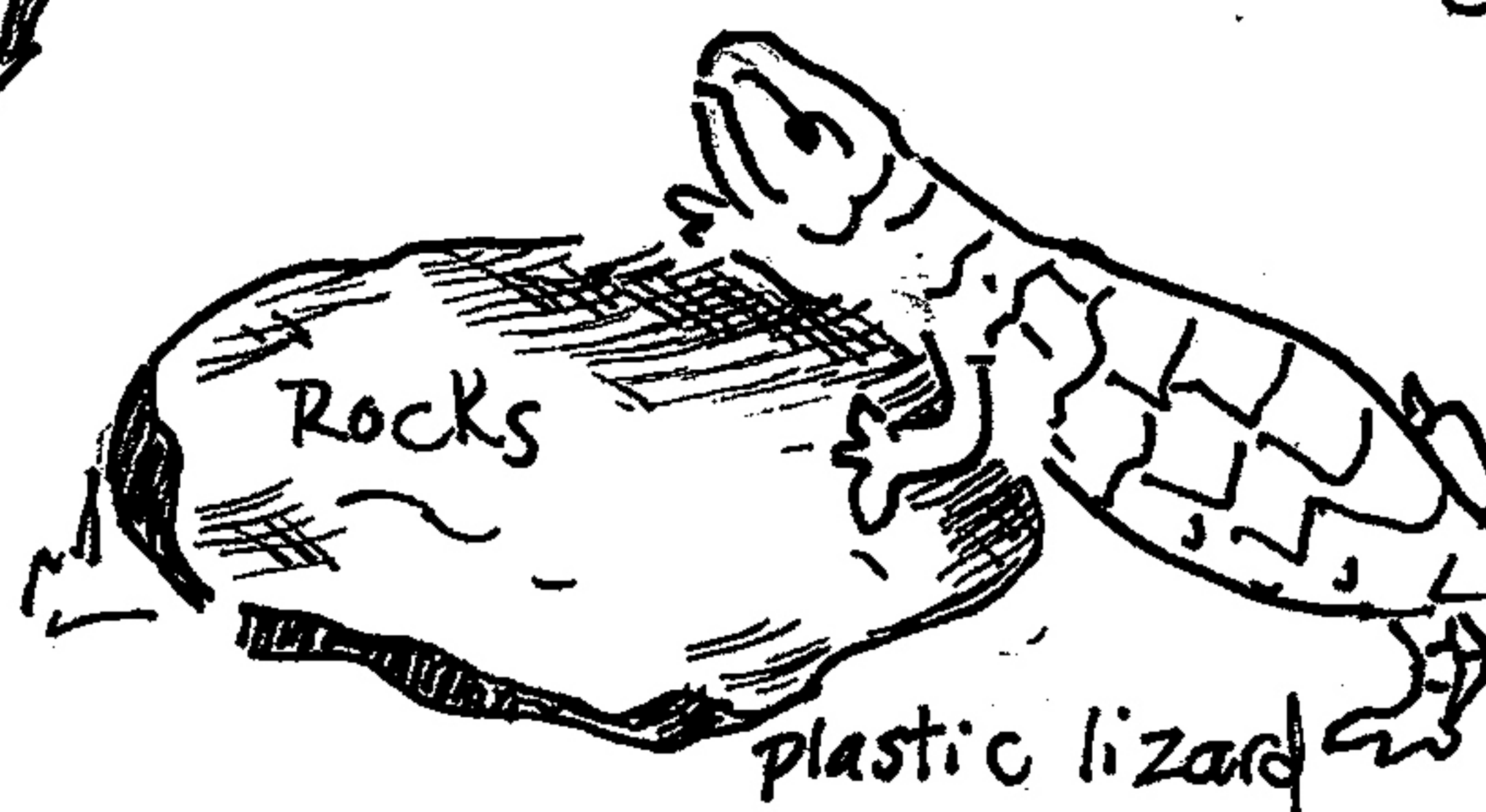
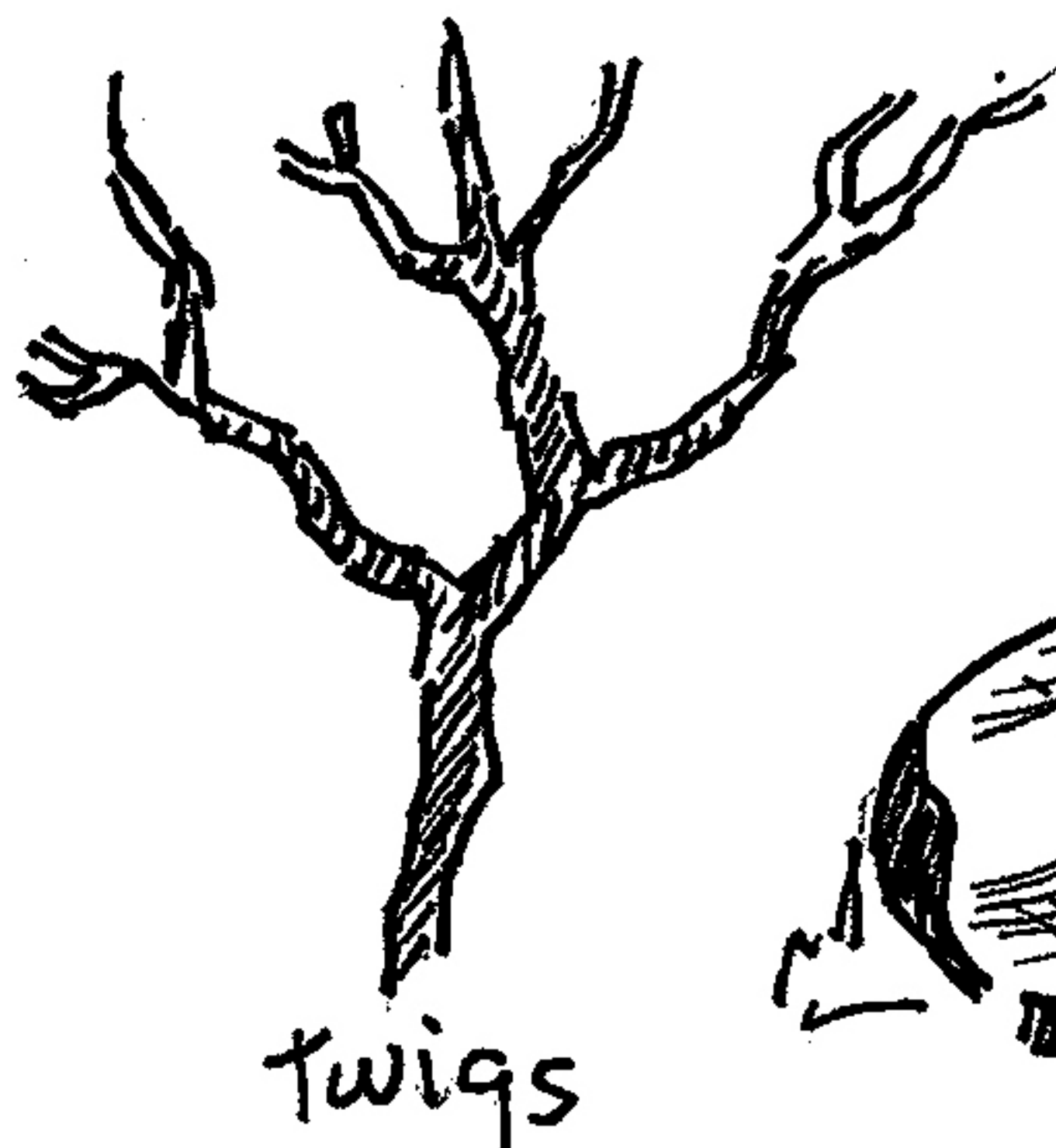
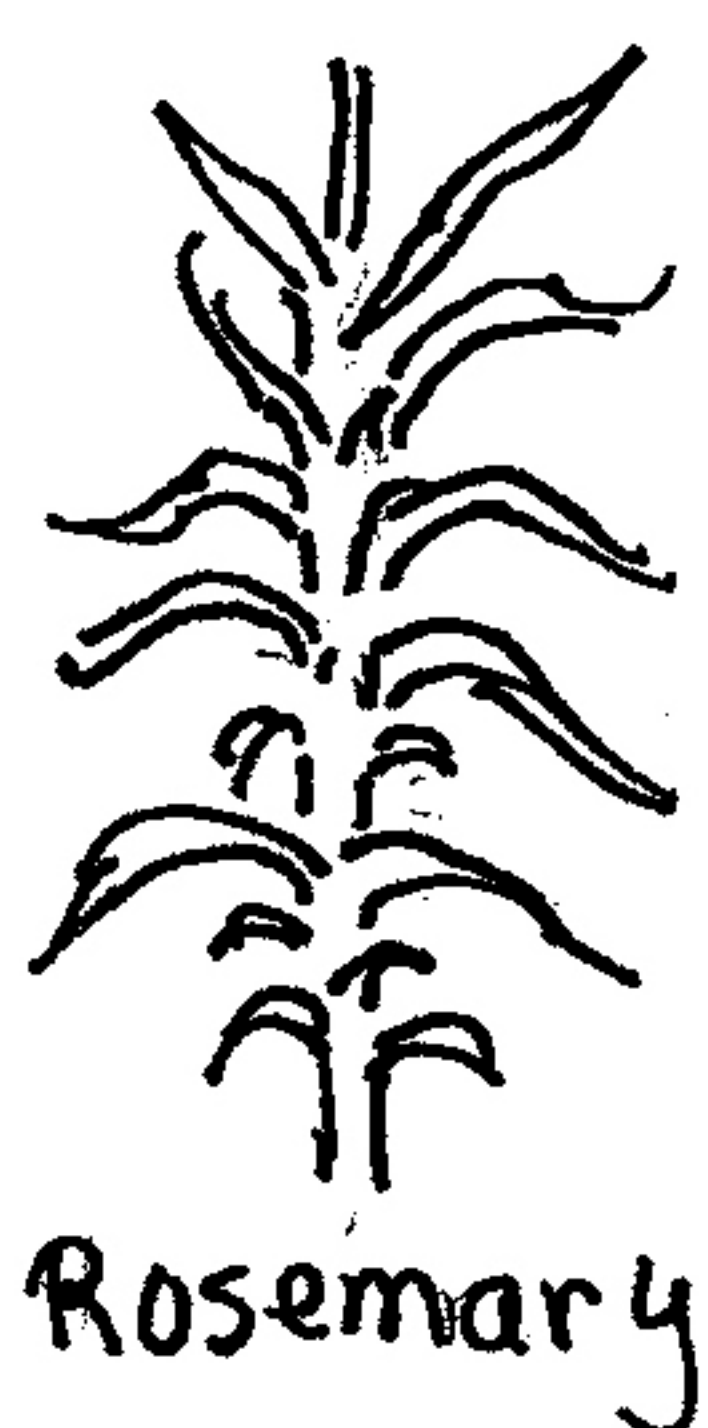
Have children collect leaves for leaf graphing. They can be graphed according to size, color, texture or shape.

SIZES OF LEAVES			
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
Oak Leaf			
Maple Leaf			
Magnolia Leaf			

Plant a Forest in the Sensory Table

The sensory table is a great area to include in the study of trees.

- Use rosemary twigs or small branches as "trees" in the sand in the sensory table. Add small plastic animals, moss, pebbles, tiny leaves for your forest.



Creative Art

One important aspect of creative art is the ability to recognize and appreciate beautiful things. Paintings, pottery, textures of fabrics and beautiful natural items should be displayed. Children need to be able to touch and enjoy them. However, many early childhood environments are totally covered floor to ceiling with STUFF! and everywhere you look it is BUSY, BUSY, BUSY! The primary colors that are used are full strength and not at all restful. Red means Run! There is some truth in the old saying that "less is more". While true for adults, it is especially true for young children, who are easily over-stimulated. White or quiet space enhances and focuses on special items. Pack up some of the extra charts, colorful bulletin board items (rotate them), introduce some soft colors, and feature beautiful objects.

Paint with Pine Needles

There's more than one way to create a painting. One special way is to take the children outdoors and pick a small branch from a pine tree. Use the pine needles instead of a paintbrush. See how many different types of textures you can get.



- Tape some of the needles together.
- Use the open needles.
- Encourage children to use their whole arm to move the pine needle brush.
- Compare the results! Which do you like best?

Wood Scrap Structure

Most children are familiar with wood scraps; however, they may not have consciously thought about them coming from a tree.

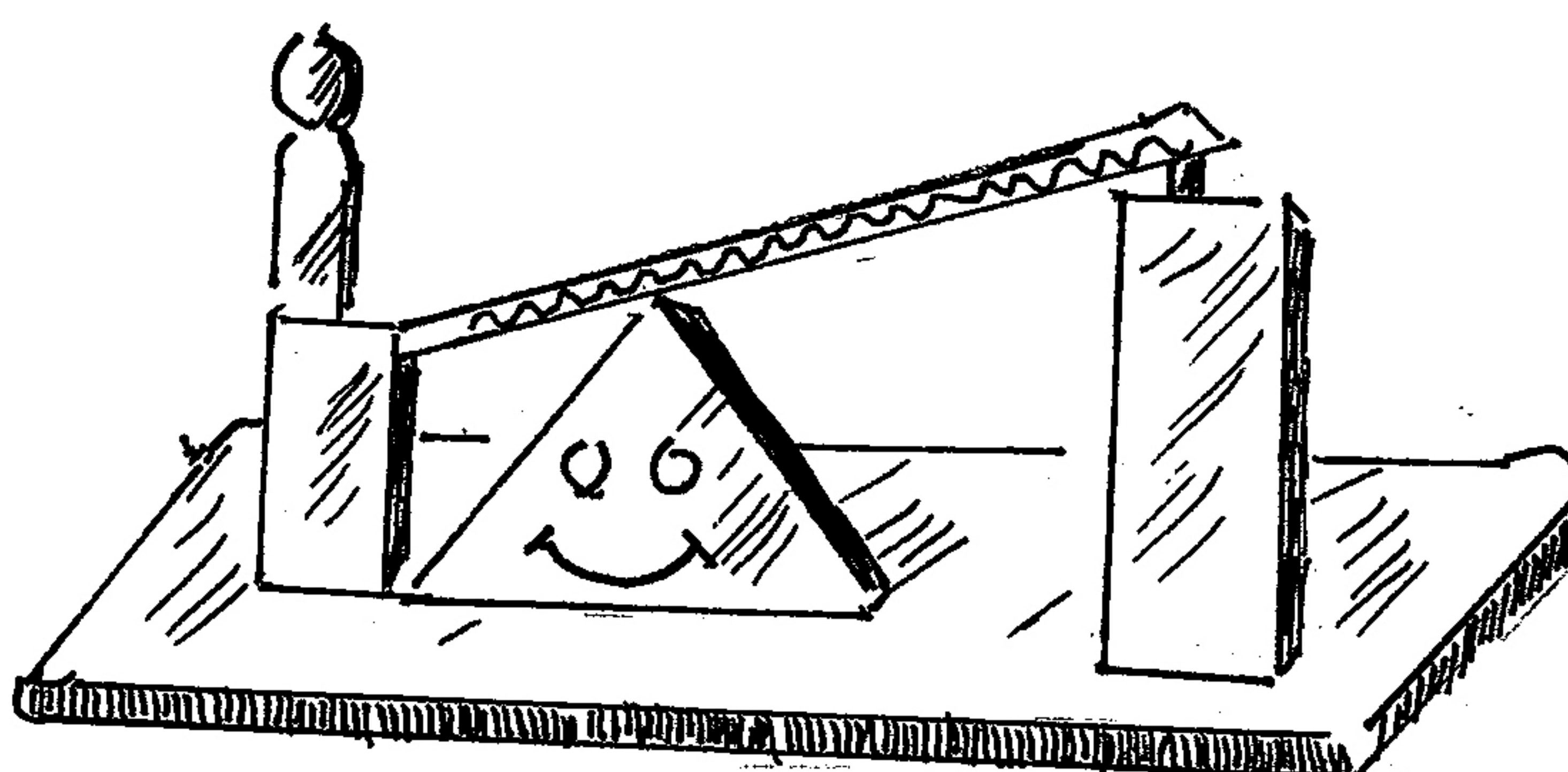
You will need:

- an assortment of wood scraps (from a lumber yard, construction site or cabinet maker).
- wood glue
- tempera paint

When you have a large selection, let children glue scraps together with wood glue to make a sculpture. After the glue has dried (for a day or two) you can let the children "stain" the wood sculptures with watered-down tempera.

Note: Tempera squares —pressed tempera that looks like large water color squares, are great for painting wood sculptures.

Keep
sculptures
small.



Sawdust paints

To create a textured paint, add a small amount of sawdust to the paint.

You will need:

- liquid tempera paint
- sawdust
- bowl or dish to mix paint + sawdust

Allow children to mix the sawdust with the paint. Make sure that they know that sawdust is created when lumber (trees) are sawed into boards.

Try painting on corrugated cardboard.

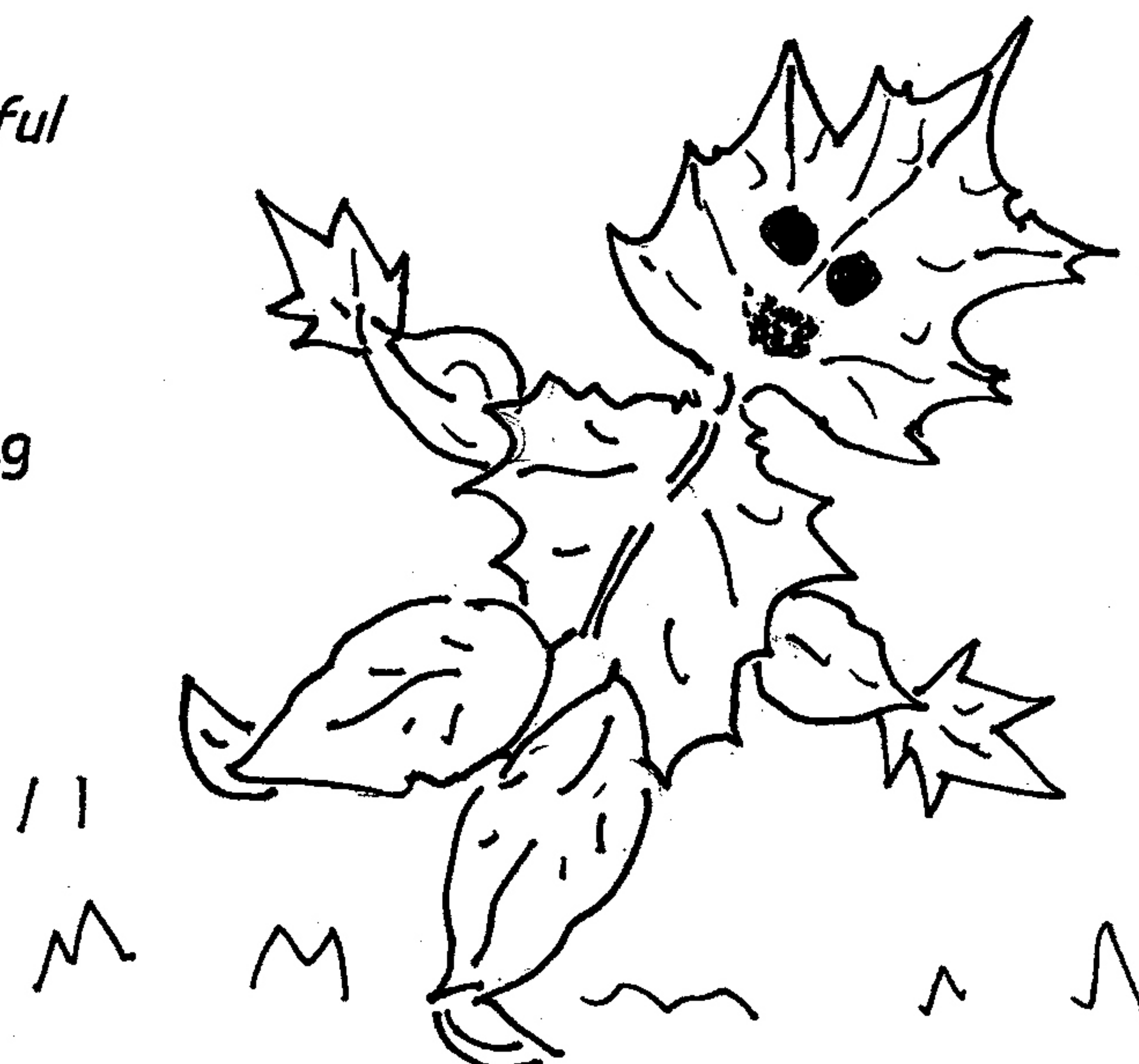
Benchmark 2:10: Creative/Aesthetic: Explores and manipulates art media.

Meet the Leaf People!

Make whimsical leaf people out of colorful leaves.

You will need:

- a collection of colorful, interesting leaves.
- construction paper or tag board
- twigs
- magic markers
- paper scraps



Let children choose one leaf to be the body of a leaf person. Glue the "body" on construction paper or tagboard. Use twigs for arms and legs, draw head and other details or use paper scraps to create features.

Note: If possible, see Lois Ehlert's new book, *Leaf Man*.

Bark/Leaf Rubbings

Rubbings are a fun way to become familiar with different textures.

You will need:

- a collection of bark (or go outside and use a tree)
- a collection of leaves
- lightweight paper
- chalk or charcoal



Arrange the pieces of bark and/or leaves.

Place the paper on the items.

Use the flat side of the chalk and rub lightly over the surface.

Benchmark 2.10 Creative/Aesthetic. Explores and manipulates art media

Food & Nutrition

Fruit and nut trees add wonderful choices for meals and snacks! They are chock full of nutrients that provide energy and can help keep children and adults healthy and well. It is becoming more and more a public mandate to help children establish healthy eating habits. Introducing them to natural fruits and nuts... products that grow on trees, is a great way to start. Enjoy the ideas for tasting, preparing and cooking activities. It has been shown that children who are involved in fixing and preparing foods are also much more interested in eating them!

Tree Treats

This is a tasting feast featuring good products from tree

Ingredients:

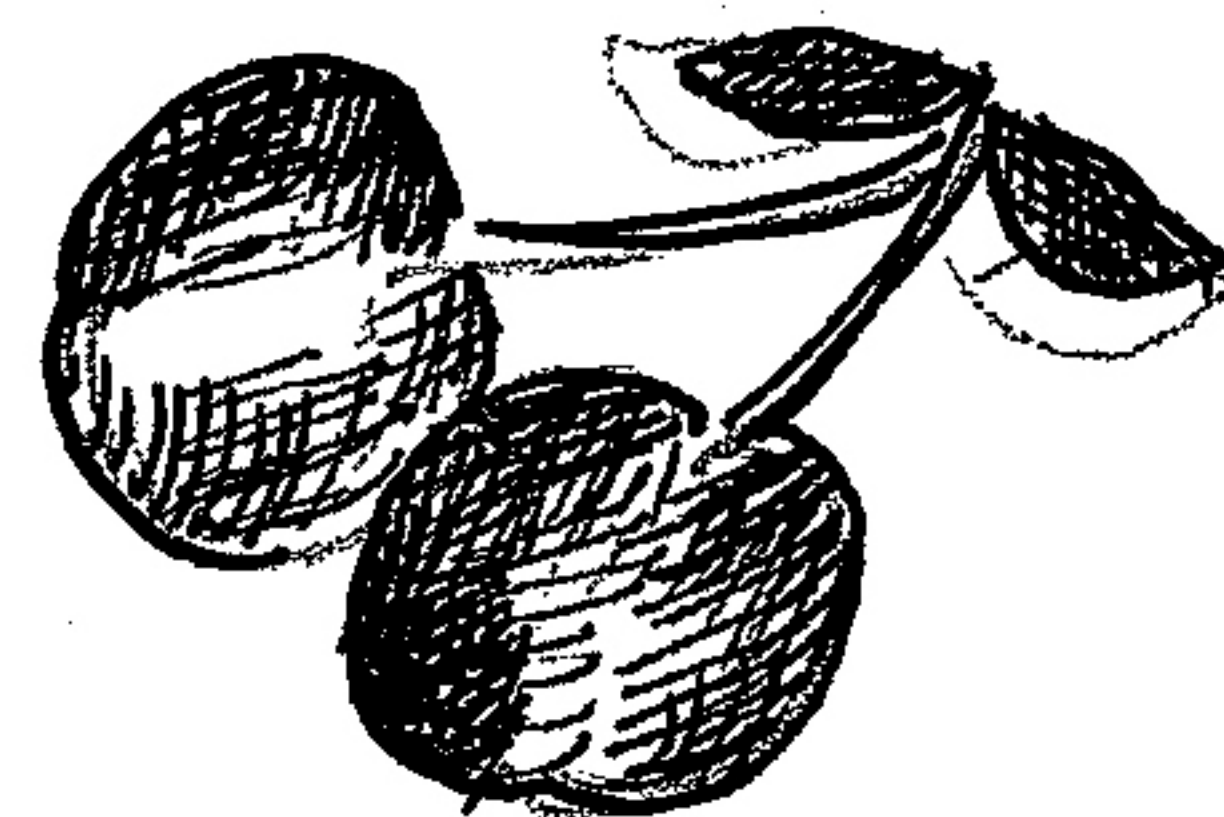
a variety of food products from trees such as:

hazel nuts*, pistachio nuts*, walnuts*, pecans*, apples, oranges, lemons, pears, plums, apricots, peaches, cherries, kiwis, bananas, coconuts, figs, dates, olives and chocolate (which is made from the seeds of the cacao tree.)

plates and labels for each type of food

- Let the children taste all the food samples.
- Compare and discuss tastes such as sweet, sour.
- Ask children which ones were new?
- Which ones were their favorites?

*Caution: Nuts are considered a choking hazard for young children. Simply display the nuts and let the children see, smell and touch them, without tasting them.



Banana Split Breakfast

Banana trees don't grow very well in Arkansas, but many of the children may have seen banana trees when on vacation.

Ingredients:

banana & 1 (4/oz.) container plain yogurt
1/2 cup dry cereal
1 handful seedless grapes (cut in half)
1 handful strawberries

- Peel banana and slice lengthwise
- Place banana halves in cereal bowl
- Top with yogurt
- Sprinkle with cereal and fruit
- YUM!

Fruity Pizza

Top this tasty pizza with a variety of fruits.

Ingredients:

- 1 English muffin
- 2 slices mozzarella cheese
- Fruit (apple, pear, banana, pineapple chunks)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

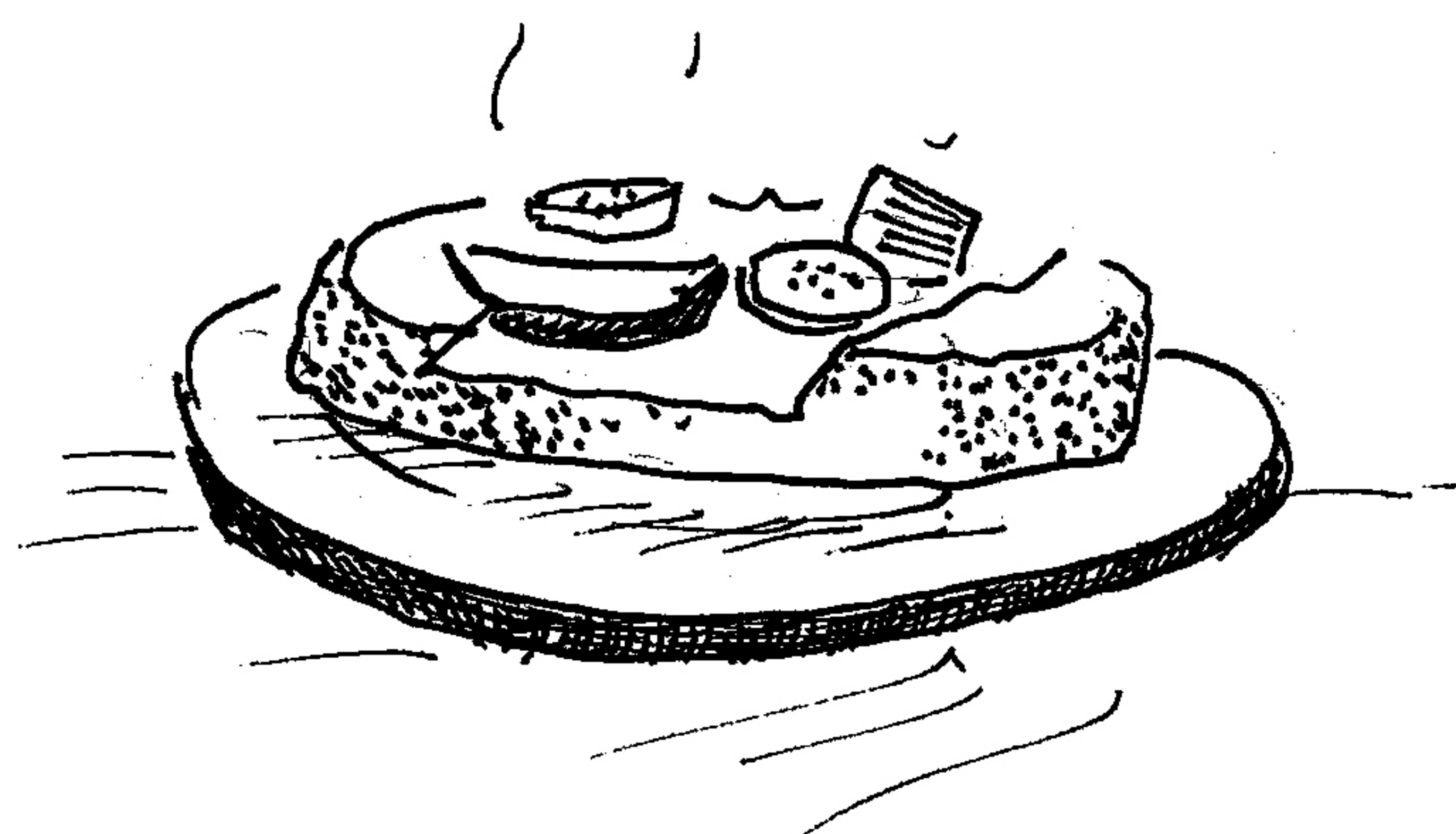
Split the English muffin and toast lightly.

Place half of cheese slice on each muffin half.

Add sliced fruit to top of cheese.

Bake for 10 minutes or until cheese melts.

Bake until cheese melts.



Lasagna Roll-ups

Ingredients:

12 lasagna noodles (8 ounces)

Sauce:

1 pound lean ground beef or soy/veggie substitute.

1 jar (26 oz). spaghetti sauce

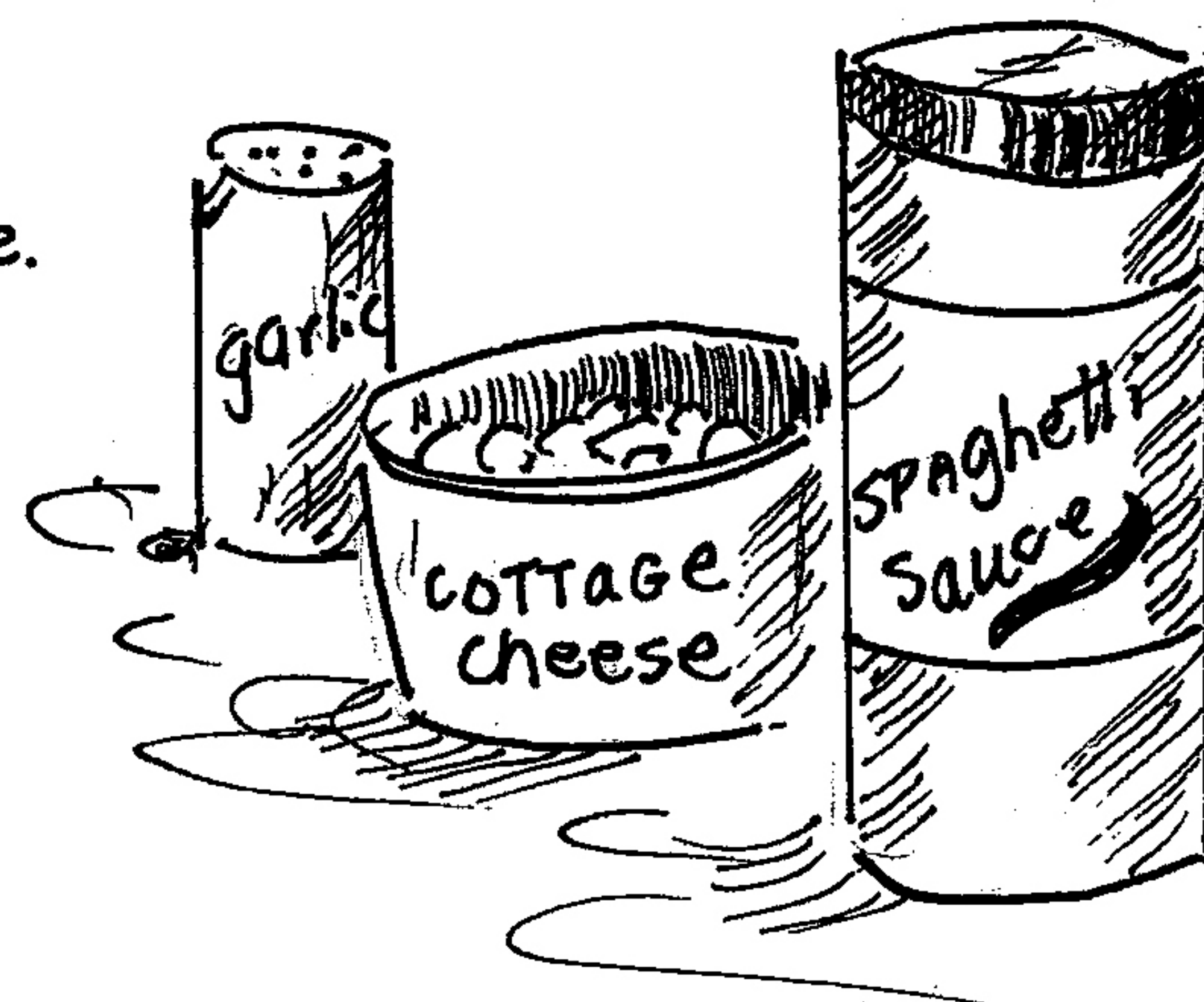
Filling:

1 large carton (24 ounces) cottage cheese

2 cups (8 ounces) mozzarella cheese, shredded

2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

1 teaspoon garlic powder



In a large pot, heat water to boiling and add lasagna noodles. When water returns to boiling, cook noodles 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Drain noodles and cool in single layer on wax paper or foil.

Cook ground beef in skillet and drain well. Add spaghetti sauce and stir.

In a large mixing bowl, combine filling ingredients.

Spoon cheese mixture over noodles, followed by sauce. Roll up and place seam-side down in 9x13 -9 inch pan lightly coated with cooking spray.

Cover with foil and bake 30 to 40 minutes or until hot.

Recipe from www.kidsaCookin.ksu.edu

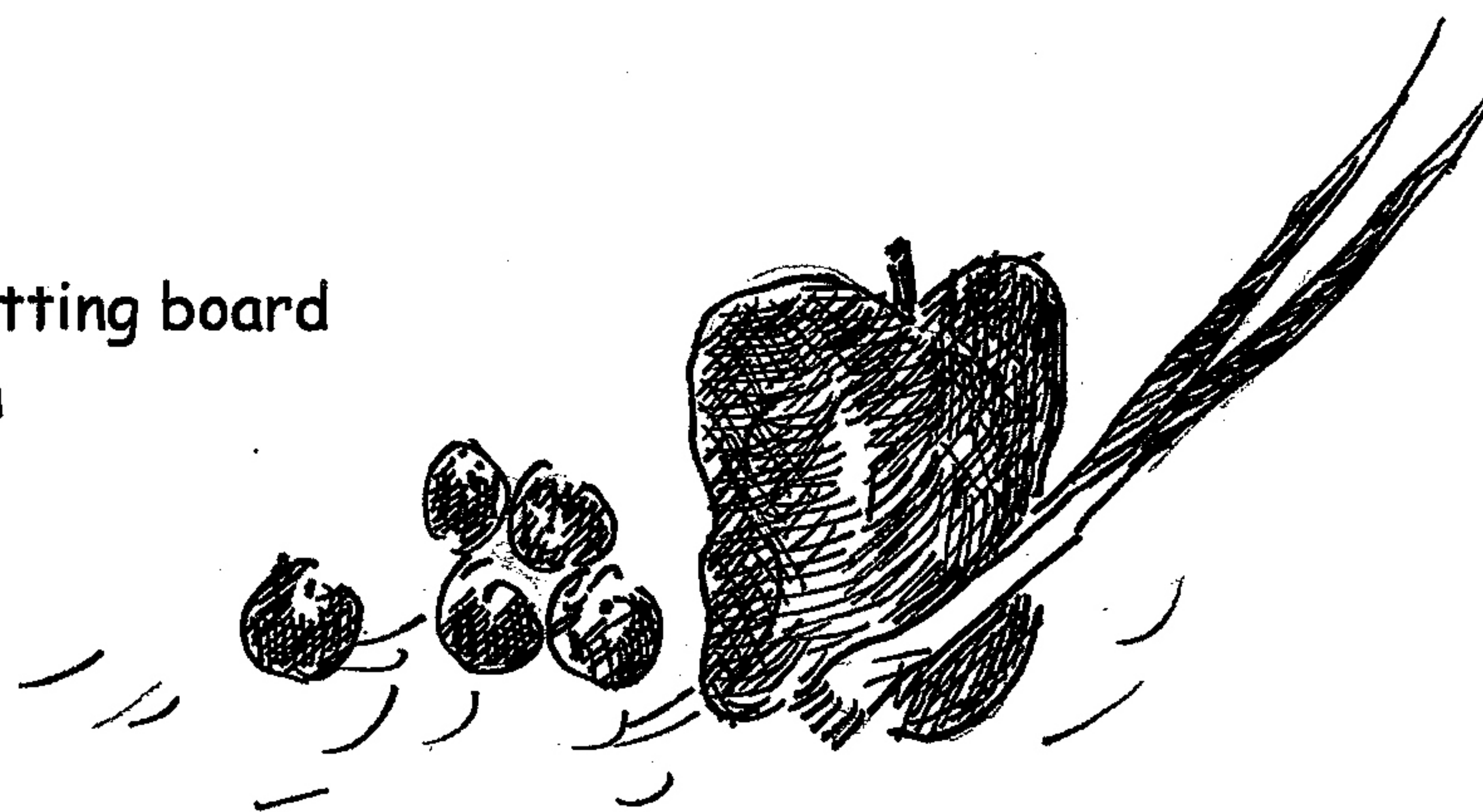
Veggie Pita Pockets

You will need the following utensils

medium bowl, wooden spoon, sharp knife, cutting board
measuring cups, measuring spoons, teaspoon

Ingredients:

- 4 pita breads
- 8 pieces of lettuce
- 3 cups bite-size cut-up fresh vegetables
(cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, green bell pepper, green onion, cherry tomatoes or zucchini)
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard



Mix vegetables, mayonnaise and mustard in the medium bowl.

Cut pita breads crosswise in half

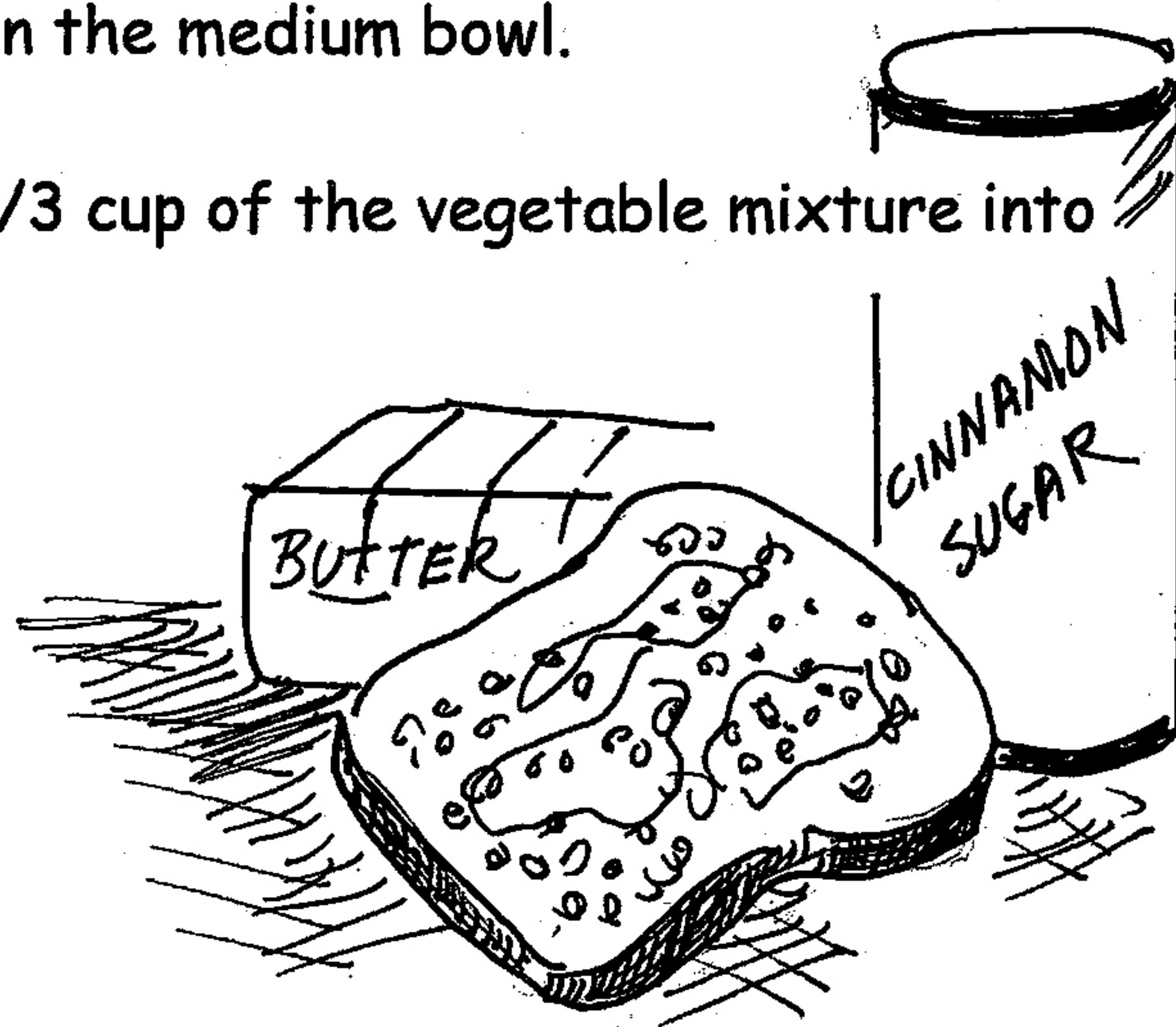
Open "pocket" in each half. Spoon about 1/3 cup of the vegetable mixture into each pocket.

Add lettuce if desired.

Cinnamon Toast

Fast and simple!

Toast whole wheat bread. Spread a little margarine or butter on top. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.

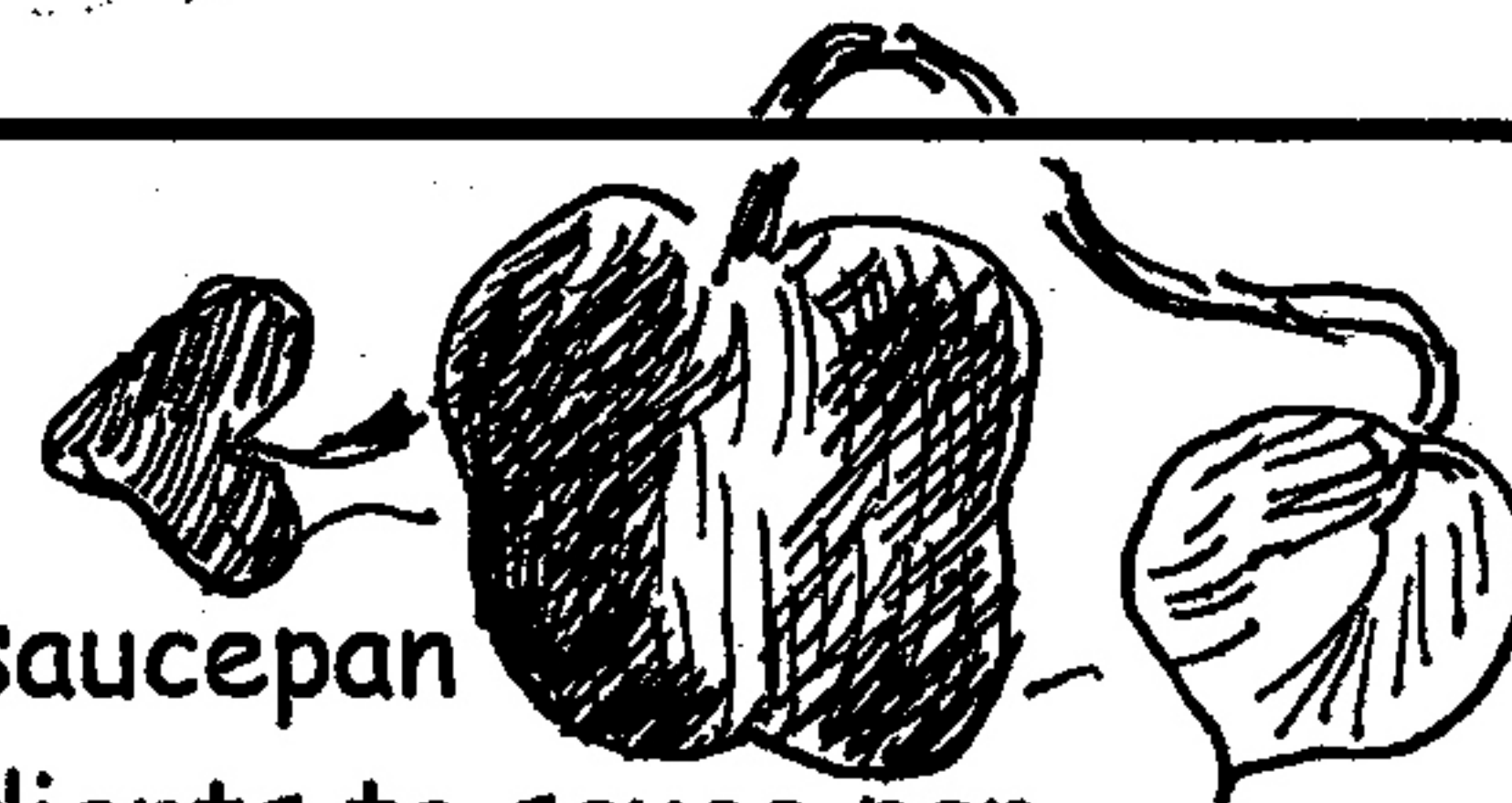


Ingredients:

- 1 (16 oz.) can pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. powdered ginger
- 3 cups milk

Pumpkin Soup

- Empty pumpkin into saucepan
- Add remaining ingredients to sauce pan.
- Whisk to combine.
- Cook on low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally with wooden spoon.



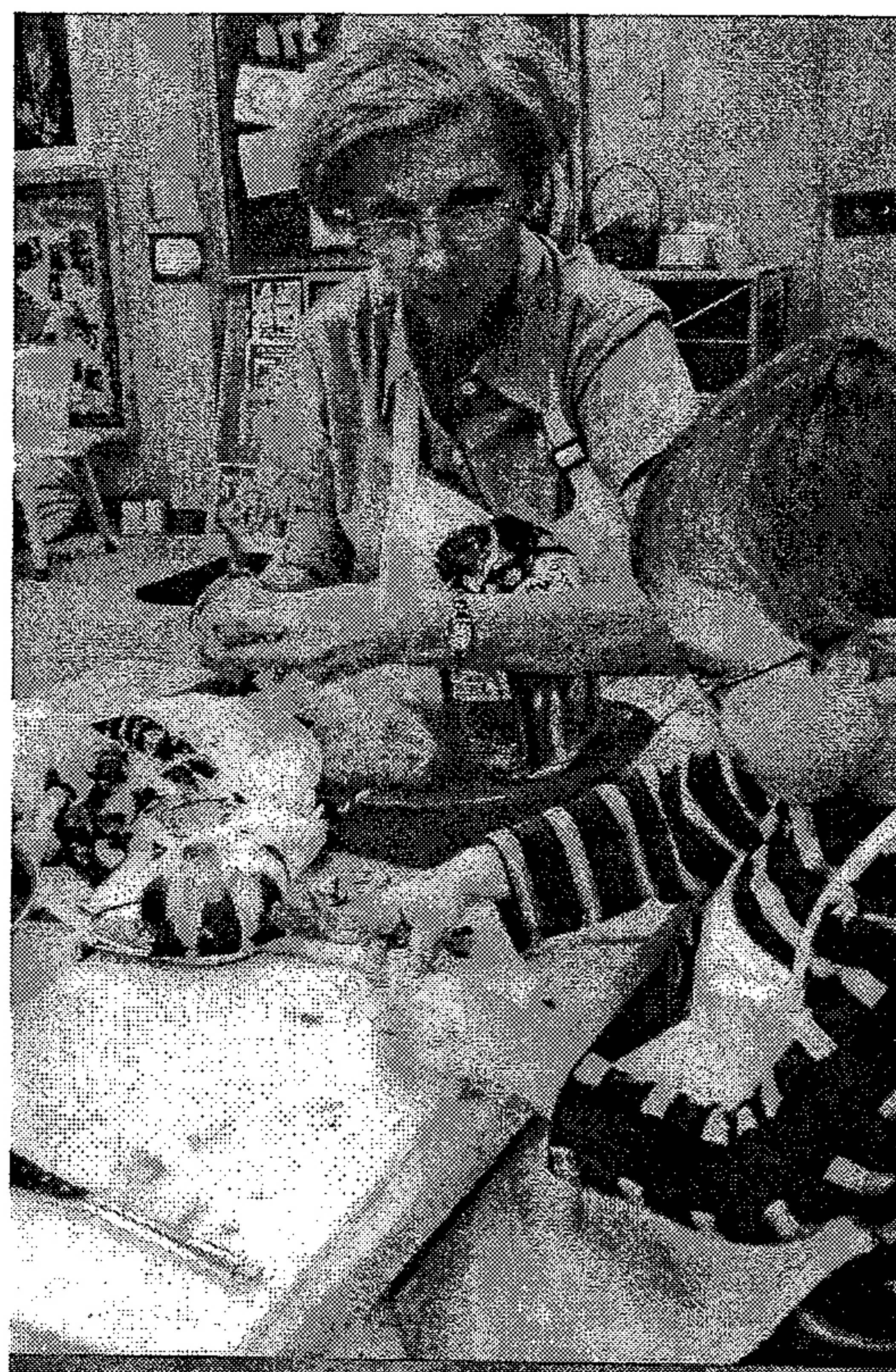
For a real cooking experience... Cook a fresh pumpkin!

Bake an Apple Pie! YUM!

Nothing says lovin' like something from the oven! And nothing smells better than a freshly baked apple pie. Let the children help create this culinary masterpiece.

Ingredients:

purchased pie crusts
7 or 8 medium apples
1/2 cups sugar
1 cup water
1 tablespoon butter
1 teaspoon lemon juice
cinnamon and/or nutmeg



- Peel the apples (children can use table knives) , place into the saucepan. Add water and sugar. Bring to a boil and cook two or three minutes.
- Spread one of the prepared crusts into a pie pan.
- Use a slotted spoon to add the apples.
- Top with butter, lemon juice and cinnamon.
- Cut the other crust into strips.
- Create a lattice top by weaving the strips together.
- Bake at 425 degree for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 350 degrees. Bake approximately 45 minutes or until the crust is beginning to brown and the smell is wonderful.

Meanwhile, simmer the remaining liquid until it begin to thicken slightly. When the pie is baked, remove from oven and spoon the hot syrup over the top. It runs down through the open lattice top and completes the pie.

We have been investigating the topic of trees, but we need your help. The children would like to put together a class book that would include a leaf or leaves that each child has brought from home.

- Take your child to the yard and together closely look at a tree.
- Talk about the kind of tree it is. Does it have blooms in the spring?
- Does it have fruit in the fall? Do the leaves change color before they drop to the ground?
- Gather a few leaves that your child can bring to share with the class.

- Think about the trees that were special to you when you were a child; share the memories with your child. Did you have a tree swing? Did you enjoy climbing trees?
- Talk about things that are made from wood that we use on a daily basis.



Did you know?

Beginnings is now available on the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education website. Read it and/or print off extra copies.

Go to: www.state.ar.us/childcare

Click on Services A to Z, then ***printed materials*** and scroll down.

Resources and References

Hart, Avery & Mantell, Paul (1993). *Kids make music*. Charlotte, Vermont: Williamson publishing.

West, Sherrie & Cox, Amy (2001). *Sand and water play*. Beltsville, MD.: Gryphon House.iu